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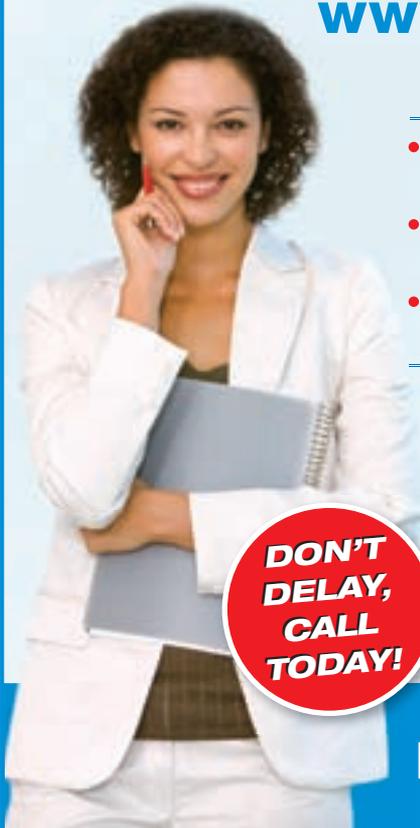


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# Letter from the publisher

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## Being responsible

**R**ecently I read an interesting article in The Times about the selling of attention deficit disorder and the contention that there had been a 20-year concerted marketing campaign by the drug industry that has resulted in soaring diagnoses and a subsequent rise in prescriptions for children nationwide.

"The Selling of Attention Deficit Disorder" written by Alan Schwarz in the Dec. 15, 2013 edition was a compelling read. It triggered a lot of feelings in me and I am using my column this time around to express some of them.

I have felt for a long time that too many people are on too many pharmaceutical drugs and that there is not always "better living through chemistry." We have to be more cautious; we as parents in particular have to be discerning about administering drugs to our children, drugs to our pets and drugs to ourselves. People linger in prisons for years for possession of pot and yet often the real drug dealers and users are on the outside, but somehow these drugs are legal and available.

The Food and Drug Administration has cited every major A.D.H.D. drug for false and misleading advertising, some multiple times. Doctors in collaboration with drug companies have been complicit in convincing parents that their children need to be medicated. The article in mention says "a pill might ease troubles and tension and has proved seductive to worried parents, rushed doctors and others."

Without a doubt we owe a great deal to the research and expertise that has brought us a plethora of amazing medications and treatments for a myriad of diseases and conditions in both adults and children. We have vaccinations that have saved millions of lives. I know, I was born in the polio era and when I was a kid

there was a diphtheria epidemic in my community. We have conquered viruses of all kinds and bacterial infections and there are amazing antibiotics out there that if used properly and when absolutely needed perform miracles.

We have to be wise however, and we have to research and inform ourselves. We have to be very reluctant to put our youngsters on

regular regimens of pill taking. Being a parent is a huge job made all the more responsible when confronted with "special issues." Behavior modification is a tricky slope and we need to be cautious and exhibit the utmost responsibility. Our children depend on us to be wise, careful and acting as their super advocates.

Therapies of all kinds not involving drugs are available and we must opt for them and give them the credibility they deserve and implement them into our children's agenda. Yoga is amazing and in this issue we have a wonderful article on how breathing techniques can be a super effective tool.

It's not easy. We have to trust and we want the best for our kids. It is important however, to do the homework and not put forth blind trust.

Thanks for reading.



Susan Weiss-Voskidis  
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# Care *for the* caregiver

BY JUDY M. MILLER

**“F**ine” is a relative term. Any parent of a child with special needs will tell you that.

“Fine” is a day that is fairly calm, without outbursts, temper tantrums, and sensory drama.

“Fine” is when a parent’s well of patience and emotion are not depleted within hours of waking, a day when she is not on the verge of tears, has no more to cry, or is not on the edge of losing it.

## Parenting a child with special needs? Remember, you have special needs too

I know this, because I am the parent of a child with special needs.

There have been many times I’ve been questioned about my parenting decisions — by those who know or don’t know my child or me. The questions have ranged from non-verbal (the scoff or stare of disbelief) to

verbal, something like, “Is she OK?”

And I’ve replied with embarrassment, anger, a need to protect my child, and a desire to draw into myself and disappear by a simple, “She’s fine.”

She was. But only I knew that. I’d spent countless dedicated hours, days, weeks, and years with my daughter and her occupational therapist while we unlocked the spectrum disorder that cocooned my girl, the disorder that shut her away from herself, her family, the rest of the world, and me.

It used to be that my daughter regularly threw herself on the hardest surface available without warning in order to receive sensory input for her disconnected vestibular system. She would lie there screaming and crying at the top of her lungs as she cycled through her process into a calm state, and then get up as if nothing unusual had happened; she was flooded and had no memory of what had occurred. Sometimes the cycle lasted 15 minutes, but more often than not, it was far longer.

I had learned to wait patiently and calmly and to keep a large buffer of time between errands, commitments, and attending to my other kids. I’d learned that there was nothing I could do to reach my daughter until she came out on the other end.

The painful input made my daughter “fine,” until the next time. Somehow she never bruised from hurling herself onto the pavement. But I did, again and again. I felt raw, deep pain and a throbbing chasm of

### How to take care of your needs

Educate yourself about your child’s special needs. Knowledge provides understanding. I found that the more I learned about my child’s special needs, the more confident I felt about how to help her cope, handle situations, and advocate for her. I was a more effective caregiver.

**Consider therapy for yourself.** You need to be as healthy as you can for your child. You can feel a whole range of emotions: anger, fear, and uncertainty among them. Your emotions are normal.

**Get support.** Develop or join a network of parents who have children with special needs. Or ask your child’s occupational therapist or physician for ideas or contacts. Many parents of children with special needs share that they feel isolated.

**Ask for help.** Tell your partner and friends how you feel. You are the primary

caregiver, and parenting a child with special needs is emotionally and physically taxing. Others probably don’t have any idea of how you are feeling. Tell them how

they can help you, like watching your child (so that you have time to replenish yourself), or offering a listening ear.

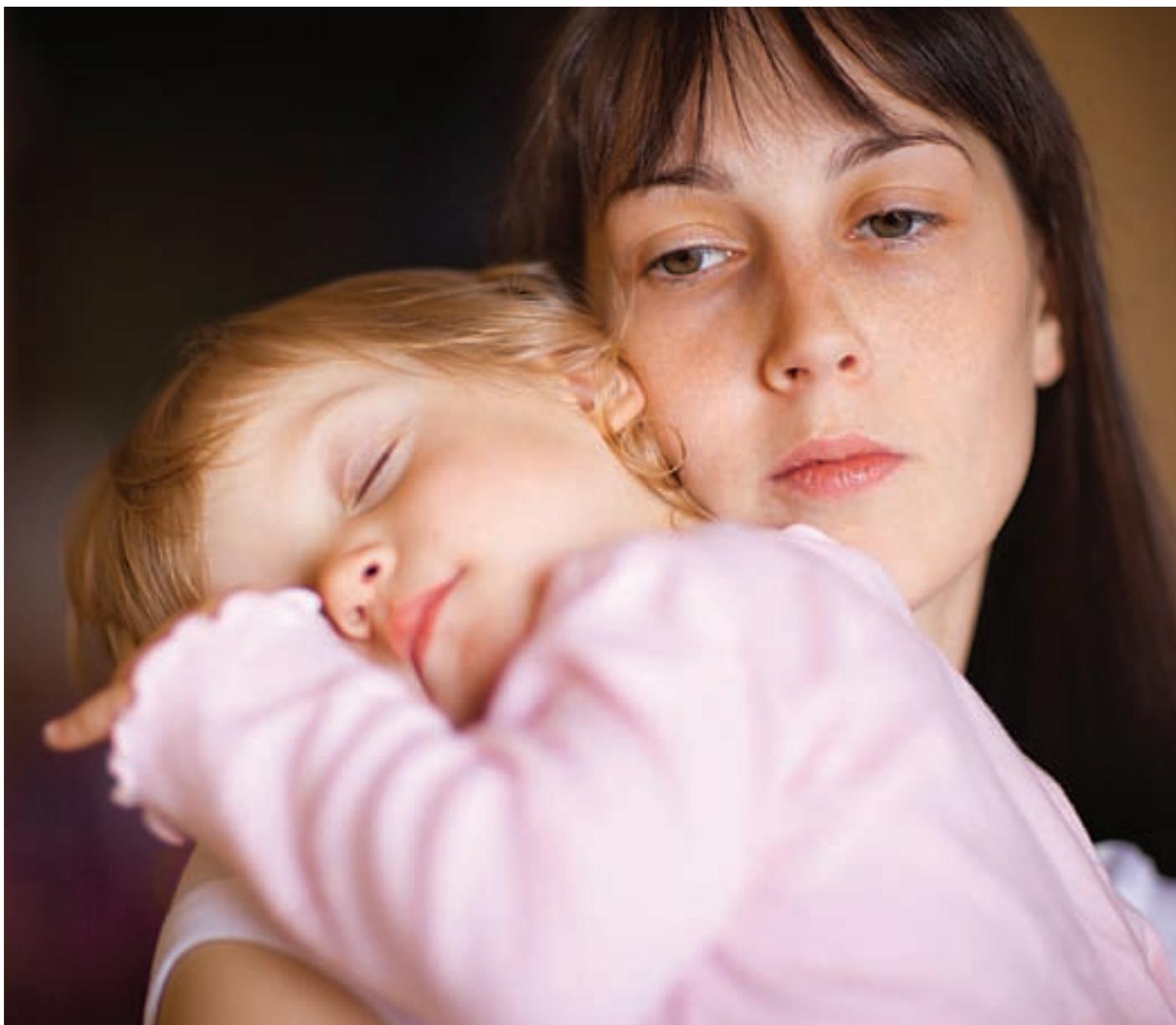
**Cry.** Stress hormones, found in tears, negatively affect every system and organ in the human body. Crying provides health by eliminating harmful stress hormones. Haven’t you found that you feel relief after a good cry?

**Give yourself personal time.** in the form of a walk, writing in a journal, or some other activity you enjoy. Every day.

**Take care of you.** Make sure you are eating food that is healthy, drinking plenty of water, exercising, and getting plenty of sleep.



Top  
Tips



apprehension that didn't begin to dissipate until Carol came into our lives.

Carol was my daughter's occupational therapist, and she helped my daughter re-integrate her sensory system over a period of six years. Her sensory-processing system was completely out of sync, exhibiting difficulties with the tactile (touch), vestibular (movement), and proprioceptive (positioning) senses, and responding with a combination of hyper- and hyposensitivity. These sensory difficulties affected her speech, hearing, and sight.

In her infinite wisdom, Carol sat me down one day and gave me a stern talking-to. She pointed out that as my daughter's system became healthier, she became manipulative. And although that was a good sign — a mile-

stone — it was time for me to expect more, to stop enabling my daughter's behavior.

Carol went on to say that as the parent of a child with special needs, I had special needs, too. I needed to look out for and take care of myself. The veneer of my "brave face" cracked with that simple statement. Choking tears coursed down my cheeks and the old-as-time woman-guilt began to loosen its hold on me.

In that moment, I realized my mother's love had pushed me to the background. I rarely thought of my needs or myself. I was emotionally spent.

I thought back to how isolated I had felt countless times. My emotional exhaustion was taking a toll on my health and my relationships with other family members. I had

let parenting a child with special needs consume me. It had been easy, because I had so much love invested in her.

Today, I hold Carol's sage advice within the invisible pocket of my heart, and take heed when I need to. I search for compassion, not pity, understanding, and support, in the form of comfort and a listening ear. And my daughter? She has become even healthier, because I have chosen to take care of my needs.

*Judy M. Miller works with pre- and adoptive parents, equipping them with new techniques and information, as well as encouraging and empowering adoptive families through difficult times. She is the author of the international-selling "What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween."*

# The value of play

BY MICHELE RANARD

**A**s mammals, we appear to be hard-wired for play. In fact, the biology of play reveals that humans require plenty of unstructured play to stay healthy.

In "Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul," psychiatrist Stuart Brown explores the biology of play in studies of animals, serial killers, and even Nobel Prize winners. His research reveals that in addition to being pleasurable and a distraction from stress, play is "a profound biological process" important for survival.

For example, in rats, play reduces impulsivity (similar to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in humans). When social mammals such as rats and monkeys are deprived of rough-and-tumble play, they enter adulthood emotionally fragile. Play helps them distinguish friend from foe, handle stress better, and form better skills to mate properly.

## Ten reasons to prioritize play

- Happier kids. We may trivialize play or fail to see its usefulness, but it's much more than having fun. In addition to improving emotional health, it serves a biological purpose. Dr. Brown says making play a part of daily life contributes to feeling fulfilled as happy, successful human beings. What constitutes play? Think beyond games and sport. Play involves books, music, art, jokes, movies, drama, and day-dreaming.

- Enhanced social competence. Play teaches people

to master and adapt to changing circumstances. Even "dealing with or avoiding being excluded" from games like tag or dodge ball are helpful social skills to learn.

- Symptoms of mild attention deficit hyperactivity disorder may be alleviated. Dr. Lara Honos-Webb, author of "The Gift of ADHD" says of the disorder, "it is important to remember that nature is medicine and activity is medicine." She suggests parents of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder make time for them to run around outside before school and be sure that recess is never taken away as a punishment for poor behavior.

- It burns fat. Trends for childhood obesity are staggering. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2010, more than one third of children and adolescents were overweight or obese. The percentage of children aged 6–11 years in the United States who were obese increased from seven percent in 1980 to nearly 18 percent in 2010. Obesity increases the risk for cardiovascular disease, asthma, sleep apnea, and type 2 diabetes.

- Play increases resiliency. After analyzing thousands of "play histories," Brown stresses that play deficiencies can lead to closed-mindedness, inflexibility, and unhappiness. Lifelong play is

part of the antidote. Play may even prevent a smoldering depression and is not just a trivial escape. Freeplay provides a vehicle for learning to problem solve, and as Dr. Brown writes, "reshapes our rigid views of the world."

- Developmental benefits. It is well established that play is helpful to development, but Dr. Brown's research reveals it may be critical. For young homicidal males and drunk drivers studied, rough-and-tumble play was missing from their childhoods.

- Strong academic performance. Playtime may be especially relevant for boys. In "Recess," psychologist Anthony Pellegrini discovered that successful peer interaction at recess was an excellent predictor

of success on standardized tests. When boys established competence on

the playground, they also fared better in the classroom and paid attention better. We appear to be hard-wired to play, yet recess and physical education classes are disappearing from the school day.

- Play opens the imagination. Kids today spend 50 percent less time outside than they did just 20

years ago. The lure of electronic devices and social networking is so tempting and culturally reinforced that the beauty of nature and fresh air get overlooked.

- It is what successful people do. Playfulness sparks creativity and innovation. Analysis of the play histories of successful adults reveals "Highly successful people have a rich play life."

- Play invigorates the soul. Play is not just a mindless activity — it is active learning. As Brown puts it: "From an evolutionary perspective, the smarter the animal, the more they play ... it gets us in touch with our core selves and the joy of life."

*Michele Ranard has a husband, two children, and a master's in counseling. She is passionate about helping parents and children lead richer lives.*

## Resources:

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# Inhale calm, exhale fear

Helping students learn more efficiently through breathing exercises



BY GWEN HORWITZ

**I**nhale: one, two, three, four. Exhale: one, two, three, four.” When I was hired to tutor a high-school student as she completed a rigorous senior project, she didn’t expect that we would begin each session by slowly counting breaths. And yet, there we were, inhaling and exhaling to a count of four, until her racing mind settled, and she became able to take on her next task.

Her project was significant: it included a written report, a Powerpoint demonstration, and lecture to her class. Whenever we met, she seemed bombarded by the overwhelming scope of the workload and how to connect each interrelated task. Her mind could not prioritize what to do first. When I initially proposed using breathing techniques to her father, I found him very supportive — as a professionally trained actor having done exercises like this for years, he immediately understood what I hoped to achieve.

So we began each tutoring session with breath work, an activity that offered her a sense of control over her anxiety. She was then better able to break her tasks down into manageable chunks and follow them through to completion. Eventually, she was able to practice these exercises on her own, and used them throughout the day as needed.

She completed the project with an A-minus, a significant improvement from her usual low “B”-range marks. Even more importantly, she learned a self-regulating skill that would serve her throughout college and beyond. Without taking a few minutes to really pause before jumping into her schoolwork every session, the rigorous tutoring we did could have become just one more pressure in her busy life.

Goldie Hawn (yes, the actress), is actually one of the champions of this modern-day mindfulness movement. She developed MindUP, an organization that has currently reached more than 150,000 students world-

wide, teaching them how to find a “happy place” in their minds. The students and families I work with prefer creating their own individualized phrase or visualization to help them settle and focus, but the bottom line is that it works. A study of more than 3,000 children in the San Francisco Unified School District found that children who practiced MindUP meditation techniques over the course of eight weeks had dramatically improved math scores than non-participants. The program also decreased suspensions, expulsions, and dropout rates. One analysis of some 270,000 kids in social and emotional learning programs from preschool through high school revealed that MindUP kids also have better regulated levels of cortisol, a hormone related to stress, and improved executive function — the capacity to organize and reason.

Having implemented guided meditation techniques in the classroom when I taught at a specialized school for children with learning disabilities in Manhattan, I witnessed firsthand how much more focused

Slow breathing and a self-created “mantra” helped the brain’s executive functioning, giving you the ability to self-soothe, refocus, and sit through discomfort to reach an important goal.

students can be when they are given a real opportunity to settle at the beginning of a lesson — especially if it’s a class made up entirely of 11-year-old boys! Taking this mindfulness approach into tutoring sessions has afforded me the opportunity to see how students of all ages can make use of these techniques.

Recently, I worked with a hyperactive first grader who was very apprehensive about his homework. We started our sessions with a short, guided visualization. The boy chose the color blue to represent calm, and red to symbolize fear. Then, he imagined inhaling the color blue, and exhaling the color red. After doing this for a few minutes, his whole demeanor changed — he became more present and was able to focus on his schoolwork for the full 45-minute session.

Another student — a sixth grader — frequently experienced panic attacks while doing math work and preferred the idea of creating personal slogans for herself to use during tests.

She would normally panic during difficult questions, skip them until later, and then lose her confidence through the rest of an exam. Instead, she began to say to herself: “Inhale calm, exhale fear, I know my material.” It sounds simple, but the slow breathing and self-created “mantra” helped her brain’s ex-

ecutive functioning, gave her the ability to self-soothe, refocus, and sit through discomfort to reach an important goal.

My husband works with children with learning disabilities as a Craniosacral Therapist. He says, “The first issue I address with a child is to help his or her nervous system feel safer, which then allows their mind to literally become more spacious, creative, and better able to assimilate information. By the time many kids reach me, their minds have already gotten used to flying into survival mode when facing overwhelming subjects, and some are already developing migraines and other physical symptoms.”

Many times, he invites parents to participate in their child’s sessions, so they, too, can bring a greater calm to their child’s learning process, instead of inadvertently being a source of their child’s anxiety.

Children can face so many pressures these days, but I’m hopeful that techniques to alleviate their anxiety and help them to become stronger learners are all around us. For example, many of my students’ parents take yoga classes, and have taken what they’ve learned on the mat and applied it to their personal lives. My job is to help them also extend these strategies to their children. If there’s one slogan I could share with this city’s families, it would be that one simple, powerful phrase my sixth-grade student invented, and one I find myself using: Inhale calm, exhale fear, I know my material.

*Gwen Horwitz is the founder of Tutoring With a Twist. Before developing this tutoring agency, she taught at the Gateway School. Horwitz is also a certified yoga and prenatal yoga instructor. Visit <http://tutoringwithatwistnyc.com>.*

*Joshua Horwitz is a Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapist and owner of Craniosacral East. Prior to being a Craniosacral Therapist, he taught leadership skills in public school and art in preschools. Visit [www.craniosacral-east.com](http://www.craniosacral-east.com).*

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# 7

## habits of highly effective parents of special-needs children

BY JUDY M. MILLER

**M**any parents of special-needs children appear to parent with grace, balance, and energy. In addition, they seem remarkably stress-free and organized.

How, in the face of all of these challenges and more, do they keep it together? What habits do they embrace that allow them to be highly effective parents for their children?

### **1 They are proactive and advocate for their children and educate others.**

Parents become experts about their children and their needs. They conduct ongoing research; ask questions of therapists, doctors, specialists, and other professionals; and keep an organized binder full of notes and important information. They create and add to their at-home special needs libraries. They are knowledgeable about the vernacular, treatments, and services. They are well-versed in the state and federal laws that regulate services for their children.

Because of their knowledge, parents are effective educators of their child's faculty and staff. They are powerful advocates for

treatment, services, and support in and outside of school.

### **2 They maintain a sense of “normalcy” within the family.**

Effective parents realize that although everyone in the family is affected by their child's disorder, they are not defined by it.

Parents work to ensure that siblings have childhoods and do not take on adult responsibilities. They encourage siblings to spend time with their friends.

Parents are proactive about training other family members, friends, and sitters about how to care for their child so that they can have time for themselves — individually and as a couple, perhaps going out on weekly dates. They also spend time in the company of other adult friends.

### **3 They take care of themselves.**

Parents nurture their needs, and recognize that doing so is important for themselves as well as their children. Effective parents address themselves holistically, meaning they take care of their physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs.

They eat nutritious, unprocessed food

and don't skip meals. They make sure their bodies are properly hydrated.

They schedule time for regular exercise, by themselves or with friends. They engage in activities that offer creative or intellectual enrichment.

### **4 They manage their stress.**

Effective parents are intentional about reducing stress in their lives by setting time aside each day to promote calm and centering. They adopt practices such as prayer, deep breathing, and meditation to replenish their inner reserves. Rebecca, whose son who is autistic, says, “When in doubt, I choose grace, to forgive people for letting me down, or for rejecting my son, for whatever reason.”

When parents lead lives that are stress-free and balanced, all family members, especially children, win. Research by the Gottman Institute supports that children fare better emotionally, socially, and academically when parents manage their stress properly.

### **5 They make rest a priority.**

While any parent can tire in their parenting responsibilities, parenting a child with special needs can elevate



fatigue to a whole different level. Sometimes, parents don't realize the extent of their exhaustion. I didn't. My child's physical therapist pointed this out to me.

Effective parents realize the importance of getting to bed as early as possible, or taking naps to offset the sleep they lose due to their child's irregular sleep patterns — up and down throughout the night, late to bed, or early to rise.

## **6 They surround themselves with energy givers.**

People are either energy zappers

or energy givers. Effective parents opt to spend time in the company of people who lift them up, make them feel confident, positive, and happy. They realize energy givers help them to feel energized, inspired, and motivated. Parents of special-needs children appreciate and need this energy.

## **7 They have a support group.**

Parenting a child with special needs can be lonely; however, there is no need to be alone in the journey. Effective parents are part of or have created

a group of parents whose parenting journeys are similar to theirs.

Christy, a single mother of a child with mental health issues shares, "I've found that meeting and sharing with people who have raised children with similar issues helps me. They understand what I deal with without me having to explain it. Their support helps me to be calm when I'm with my child."

*Judy M. Miller is a mom to four fantastic kids — three with special needs. She is the author of the parent guide "What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween."*

# Giving voice to families impacted by autism

A new picture book, “Silent Voices,” highlights the occurrence of autism, how it can afflict any child, and how it impacts families.

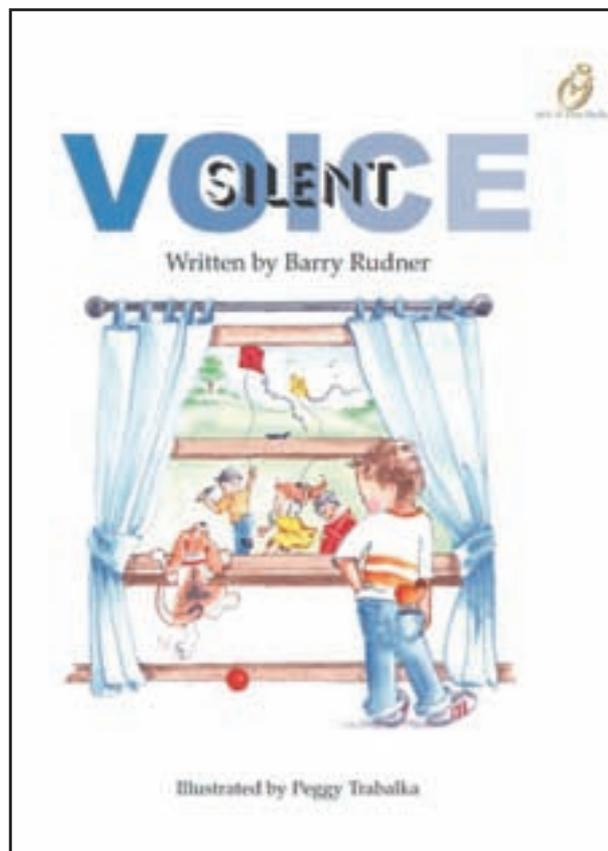
“Just think of having a child who is perpetually hidden in plain sight,” says author Barry Rudner. This is autism.

In his powerful and poignant new book “Silent Voice,” Rudner highlights the pandemic occurrence of autism, how it can afflict any child, and, like any malady, how it robs children of their youth, impacting families and communities everywhere.

The carefully crafted verses in Rudner’s compellingly illustrated picture book vividly reveal the horror of a disease that afflicts one in 88 children: “Without favor it strikes at the playground of youth. It lays dormant in children when joy should take root,” reads an excerpt.

The book addresses the symptoms of autism, including “stimming” (repetitive motor behavior), withdrawal, and delayed oratory development, as well as autism’s devastating impact on families and the geological need to uncover its causes.

Rudner emphasizes that this can only be accomplished through increased awareness. He writes to-



wards the book’s conclusion:

“The bridge that will span autism’s defiance, are those who will meld awareness and science.”

“In short,” he notes, “we must never retreat from hoping children afflicted with autism will recover their youth, which means we must not ever retreat from trying to determine autism’s causes.”

He comments, “I wrote this book to address the need for autism awareness but also to bring awareness to all disabilities. My nephew has cerebral palsy, and my sister and brother-in-law would do anything to see him walk, or talk, or put a spoon to his mouth. Instead, he is held captive inside a body with no motor skills.”

He adds, “There is not a parent alive who would not give anything to see their child healthy. The parents of children who fall within the spectrum of autism are no different.”

Rudner has been a writer and poet of self-esteem books for children for more than 30 years.

“*Silent Voice*” by Barry Rudner, illustrated by Peggy Trabalka, Nick of Time Media, Inc.; \$14.99.

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# Trust your instincts

New book suggests doing the *opposite* of everyone's advice about your autistic child

BY RAUN K. KAUFMAN

In the early days of your child's life, you may have had a vast ocean of hopes, dreams, and plans. Maybe some were as simple as snuggling with your child or playing peek-a-boo. Perhaps some, such as your child's high school graduation or wedding day, seemed far off in the future.

But then your child was diagnosed with

autism. You may have heard, in the recesses of your mind, the sound of a thousand doors slamming shut as prediction after dire prediction was laid at your feet. You may have been told your child will never talk, have friends, hold your hand, attend a regular school, go to college, have a job, or get married. You may even have been told that your child will never truly love you.

You might have been advised to discard your hopes and dreams and be "realistic." Certainly, no one could fault you for feeling at times as if you're drowning in a sea of grief, fear, and possibly anger.

But it is absolutely crucial for you to understand that you do not have to accept the limits placed upon your child by others. And it is vital for you not to feel pressured into using an approach with your child that doesn't feel right to you. Most parents of children on the autism spectrum feel that they have to rush around trying to stamp out their children's repetitive, "autistic" behaviors (usually called "stims") and push their children to do or learn other, more "appropriate" behaviors. Many mothers and fathers hold their noses and parent this way, because they've been told that it's the only way to help their children — even though it's difficult, stressful, exhausting, doesn't

seem loving, and can feel like they're fighting their own children.

Maybe you're one of the millions of parents who've been told, in no uncertain terms, that this is the way you have to parent your child on the spectrum. But maybe you're also a parent who feels that parenting this way goes against your natural instinct to connect with your child, to bond with your child, and to reach into your child's different and special world.

You're not alone. And you're not wrong.

Guess what? If you do the opposite of what everyone's telling you to do, you could actually see significantly more progress with your child — and feel so much more connected to your child and to your own parental instincts. In fact, I wrote my new book, "Autism Breakthrough," specifically to enable parents to help their children grow and learn while going with, instead of against, their children, bonding more with their children rather than doing battle with them.

When you're told to focus on extinguishing some behaviors and training your child to do other behaviors, you're being told something that is based on a totally outdated, incorrect, and, ultimately, unhelpful view of autism. Believe it or not, getting your child to change his behaviors does not address your child's autism. Why? Because, contrary to popular understanding, autism is not a behavioral disorder; it is a social-relational disorder.

What does that mean? Well, our children — children on the autism spectrum — certainly behave differently; no doubt about that. But these behaviors are symptoms, and stamping out symptoms does nothing to help our children with their core challenge: connecting to, relating to, and communicating with other people.

Helping your children with his central deficit requires defying everyone else's behavior obsession and committing to one thing: creating a relationship — on your child's terms, in your child's world.

Deep down inside, you know this. Your own parental instinct is probably screaming it. But it's hard to hear it over the din of everyone else's voices.

Now you have the opportunity to listen to your own long-buried parental instinct. Because you're about to learn the specific way to translate your love and your instinct to connect with your child into concrete, results-producing action.

Doesn't that sound awesome?

Okay, here we go.

Next time your child stims, join your child. Yep, that's right. Everyone else says to stop, limit, or redirect these behaviors. You're going to join in with him. If



your child is stacking blocks, you stack your own pile of blocks. If your child is ripping paper into tiny strips, you do the same. If you child is repeating a line from a movie over and over, you repeat it, too. And if you have a child with Asperger syndrome who loves to talk about airplanes, then listen to what he says with bated breath; become an airplane fanatic!

Some well-intentioned people who are used to focusing on behavior may tell you that joining might make things worse. (It won't.) Remember, if these people were correct, you'd be completely happy with what you've been doing with your child and with your child's progress, and you wouldn't be reading this article.

Autism is a social-relational disorder, and you can't help your child to overcome his significant social-relational challenges with an anti-social approach. Trying to stamp out our children's behaviors breaks trust and alienates them. And this trust is your most important asset in helping your child to progress!

When you join your child in his stim, you create a connection around a common interest. Human beings have been creating interpersonal relationships this way for thousands of years! Joining is about creating a relationship, a trusting bond, a sweet rapport, based upon diving into your child's world, loving what your child loves, exploring what your child is exploring, cherishing what your child cherishes.

Have you every wondered if your child can understand the deep love you feel for him? When you join, you are showing deep love for your child in a way that he can truly understand. You are saying (through action), "I love you. And because I love you, I love what you love."

This is exactly what my parents did with me! As a boy, I was diagnosed with severe

autism by multiple experts. My parents were told that I had an IQ below 30, would never speak, and would end up spending my life in an institution. Seeing the dismal outcomes offered by conventional treatments, my parents pioneered a new way: the Son-Rise Program. And three-and-a-half years after my diagnosis, I recovered fully from my autism with no trace whatsoever. I went on to graduate from the Ivy League's Brown University with a degree in Biomedical Ethics, something that only happened because my parents did the opposite of every recommendation they received.

Now, it means so much to me that I get to work with our team of more than 70 at the non-profit Autism Treatment Center of America to show parents how to help their children in the same way that my parents helped me. For the past 15 years, I have seen firsthand how joining children in their own unique worlds results in these children engaging with us more and stimming less. Sure, we have many other techniques that we use besides joining in order to help our children learn new things and reach new heights. But it all begins with joining — and with the love, caring, bonding, and finally released parental instinct behind it.

*Raun K. Kaufman is the author of the new book "Autism Breakthrough: The Groundbreaking Method that has Helped Families All Over the World" (St. Martin's Press). Kaufman serves as the Director of Global Education for the Autism Treatment Center of America. As the key spokesperson for the center and the Son-Rise Program, he conducts lectures and seminars worldwide and has worked with families and professionals for more than 15 years. Kaufman has been featured on NPR, BBC, Fox News, and in People Magazine. He co-hosts the radio show "Raun & Kristin: Bringing Hope Into Your Home on Autism Approved Radio."*



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# Dealing with disappointment



## An age-by-age guide to helping kids bounce back

BY MALIA JACOBSON

**C**hildren's lives are chock-full of disappointments large and small. Your toddler's long-lashed eyes are brimming with tears, her hopes of playing at the park dashed by the swirling snowstorm outside. Your 8-year-old animal-lover begs for a dog, only to learn that he's allergic. Your teenager wasn't selected for the basketball team despite logging hours of grueling practice.

These situations are nearly as hard on parents as they are on children — nobody wants to see their child suffer. How can parents help kids navigate a world that isn't always fun or fair? Read on for age-by-age guidelines on helping kids bounce back from disappointment and failure.

### **Toddler, preschool ages 2-6: Protective measures**

It's instinctive to want to protect young children from the sadness that accompanies disappointment, but this tactic can backfire.

"Many well-intentioned parents structure their child's environment to try to avoid allowing the child to feel any disappointment," says parenting coach Stephanie T. Jones, chair of the North Carolina Parenting Education Network.

Parents' motivations are positive — they generally want to help a child avoid negative emotions and be more successful. But shielding kids from uncomfortable feelings can prevent them from developing the emotional resilience required for success in preschool and beyond.

Protecting kids from all disappointment or failure can be crippling to preschoolers, says Dr. George S. Everly, Jr., affiliate professor of psychology at Loyola University Maryland and author of "The Resilient Child: Seven Essential Lessons for Your Child's Happiness and Success." Instead of giving in to a child's unreasonable demand simply to keep the peace, acknowledge and name his emotion — "I know you're angry that you can't have that cookie before dinner, but you'll have to wait" — to validate his feelings without stifling emotional growth.

### **School, ages 7-12: Future focus**

Notoriously emotional, tweens tend to exaggerate even small setbacks. But parents shouldn't dismiss

seemingly insignificant emotional upsets; a minor issue like a poor grade can seem like a mountainous problem to a school-age child.

Resist the temptation to use a disappointing situation to prove a point, says Jones. At the height of a child's emotional distress, voicing that he might have avoided the bad grade by studying harder makes the problem immediately worse. Instead, listen without replying or swooping in to solve the problem, advises Jones. Sometimes, all your child wants is your ear.

"When failures occur, it's important to keep a future orientation," notes Everly. "Ask the child what he or she learned from the failure that will help promote success in the future."

Encourage positive, future-focused thinking about what your child might do differently next time. To help build confidence to try again, adopt the mantra, "Anything worth having is worth failing for!"

### **Teen years 13-18: Confidence in crisis**

With jobs, college admissions, sports success, and romantic relationships all on the line, disappointments loom large for teens. After a setback, help your dismayed teen cope by focusing on her setback, instead of on your own feelings.

"It's critical for parents to pause and reflect on their own emotional response to their teen's disappointments and failures," says Jones. Some parents are over-involved in their teen's success and take a child's failures personally — which can lead to regrettable reactions instead of constructive help.

Teens who cope with disappointment well are those with "an inner confidence," says Everly. Parents should play a supporting role, allowing teens to solve problems independently, and stepping in as a coach or cheerleader only when needed. Teens with strong self-efficacy — belief in their own ability to handle life's problems — are better equipped to deal with the emotional roller coaster ride of the teenage years. And resilient kids of all ages are well-prepped for the future, whatever it holds.

*Malia Jacobson is a nationally published parenting journalist. Her most recent book is "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."*

# Exploring the great outdoors

*Natural environment is conducive to learning*

BY REBECCA MCKEE

**W**arm and sunny spring days after a long winter recently sparked some ideas about how we can provide support to those living with autism spectrum disorder.

We all know how time outside, soaking in that much needed vitamin D from the sun, is super healthy for us. According to a New York Times story, the benefits of exercising outside might improve dispositions or inspire greater commitment to an exercise program. People who spend active time outdoors have lower levels of cortisol, which is a hormone related to stress. After exertion takes place, that exposure to direct sunlight is known to positively affect mood.

Natural Environment Teaching means that one uses the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and relates them to the real world. For example, instead of teaching a child how to label a cup in a discreet trial format, one would set up a teaching scenario in the kitchen where the cups are located. Teaching in the natural environment promotes motivation, diversified learning, and generalization. It decreases dependency on prompts, apathy, and the inability to transfer skills. Why not take it into nature?

Toddlers, school-age children, and older teenagers can all benefit from learning outside. Most learning may probably takes place indoors, due to structure, materials, and organizational needs, but time outdoors can be an added bonus. Nature naturally allows for multi-sensory learning, pairing the environment with reinforcement, physical activity, healthy exposure to sunlight, and social skills development.

Imagine expanding receptive and ex-



pressive language as you hike or take a walk — the environmental scenery provides a colored tapestry for labeling. For instance, a parent questions while pointing, “What’s that?” The child answers, “A rock.” Intraverbal fill-ins can carry a conversation along many a trail. Adult says, “Let’s pick a \_\_\_\_,” and child says, “Flower.”

Strolling down any Main Street can lead to practicing a host of cognitive skills. Playing “I Spy” as you pass signs and storefronts can lead to finding certain colors, numbers, and letters. Time spent lounging

in a beach chair along the sea is a perfect setting for positively practicing being calm, having a relaxed body, and keeping voices quiet or silent. These are all replacement behaviors for physical or verbal offenses. Practice leads to pro-social improvement!

Try your best to take advantage of sunny days and inviting weather. As always, proactively have a plan in mind — and inform your special needs child prior to departure. End excursions on positive notes in order to promote positive outings in the future.

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# Track your child's progress with Kidz Talk

## Educator develops speech aid app that tracks students' success

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Learning to understand and accurately respond to language is a fundamental skill for children. If a child has a speech delay, impediment, or is diagnosed with autism, it is helpful to have recorded audio of the child's verbal language to aid with speech development. However, it is hard for parents to consistently record a child's language and growth. Now, "there's an app for that" to address this issue.

Kidz Talk is an app that can serve as an aid for tracking a child's progress in speech development. Sound bites can be shared through text messages or e-mail. I had an opportunity to speak with the creator of Kidz Talk, Susan French, who has been in the field of education for more than 25 years. Here's what the seasoned teacher and app creator had to say:

**Shnieka Johnson:** How did you get the idea for the Kidz Talk app?

**Susan French:** Over the years, I've worked with many children with special needs. I've also noticed that in a given classroom there would be a small group of children that could read (and speak) full sentences with no understanding of the words and their meanings without a pictorial aid. I knew that if these kids were having trouble so were many other kids. To address this concern, I created the app to reach more than the children in the classroom. The app utilizes pictorial aids and can be used with English-as-a-Second-Language students as well.

**SJ:** So, you saw that was there a need?

**SF:** Yes, speech is one of the most important areas of communication. I want people to use this app with children who have delayed speech and other issues. It [the app] is meant to be fun, interactive.

**SJ:** How was the app tested and reviewed?

**SF:** I tested the concept with a small group of children before the app was developed. After the reactions and hearing feedback from parents, the technician applied changes to the app. The share option to Kidz Talk — the desire — had been expressed by the parents.

**SJ:** With so many studies and articles about kids and "screen time," how is Kidz Talk different from other apps?

**SF:** Kidz Talk is not a game, even though it is fun and interactive like a game. I use question words (who, what when, where, why) and keep Blooms Taxonomy (creating, evaluating, analyzing,



applying, understanding, remembering) in mind. The app asks elementary-level children open-ended sentences and encourages the children to use higher-order thinking. There is no right answer.

**SJ:** So, is this an app or is this a tool?

**SF:** For children with special needs or diagnosed with autism, this is a tool that serves as an aid in keeping track of progress in their verbal language skills. There are levels suitable for all kids (including ESL students) grades pre-K through fifth grade.

**SJ:** How can schools and speech therapists use this app?

**SF:** Teachers can use this as a tool or edu-

cational resource to track a child. Parents can utilize this by interacting together with the child and by listening to the speech.

**SJ:** So, walk me through it. What will happen when my child opens the app?

**SF:** Well, first the child will see the icons on the view page, familiar images. They'll click an icon and hear a short story. Then the child will answer questions about the story — who, what, when, where, why — questions. After answering questions (which will be recorded), the child (with parent help) can share the audio via e-mail or text.

**SJ:** So, this has the capability not just for the child to share with a parent, but for a parent to share audio with a speech therapist? Or teacher with speech therapist?

**SF:** Yes. They (the parent) can then share the recording via e-mail or text with the child's teacher or speech therapist.

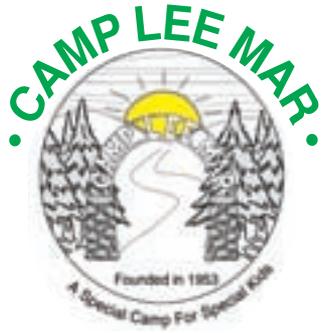
**SJ:** Is there any other information that you'd like for parents to know?

**SF:** I want to have parents know about this app and encourage them to have a better understanding of English language arts speech standards in the Common Core (noted in the Common Core State Standards as speaking and listening). I also want them to know that the app is an affordable tool, and I want to make sure that it remains affordable and accessible to those who need it.

Kidz Talk is a great resource for parents, teachers, and speech therapists and is available for download from the App Store's Education category at [itunes.apple.com/us/app/kidz-talk/id817679677?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/kidz-talk/id817679677?mt=8), and is compatible with the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

For more, visit the Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/kidzrtalking](https://www.facebook.com/kidzrtalking).

Shnieka L. Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan, where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: [www.shnieka-johnson.com](http://www.shnieka-johnson.com).



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# The benefits of special-needs

# CAMPS

BY DENISE YEARIAN

**A**t age 6, Kim Kelly paid her first visit to a special-needs' residential camp. It was an experience she and her family will never forget. Up to this point, she had lived a pretty sheltered life, her mother Ruth explains.

"Because she has a hearing loss and an orthopedic problem, it was natural for me to want to hold her close."

By bringing Kim to camp, her mother realized two things: "My daughter needed to learn to do things on her own, and I needed to let go a little." For the Kellys, it was a positive experience.

There's a host of benefits children derive from attending camp, but for kids with special needs, those benefits are amplified, says Sandy Cameron, editor of *Camping Magazine*.

"Traditional camps do a great job mainstreaming special-needs' children into their programs, but a special-needs camp lets them be with other kids who have similar disabilities," Cameron explains. "The programs are pretty much the same, but may be altered to meet the children's needs."

Heidi Haldeen, summer program specialist for Easter Seals, agrees.

"At a special-needs camp, kids have the same opportunities they have at traditional camps. The only difference is the activities are modified according to the campers' needs. This gives them a chance to shine."

That's what 9-year-old Tiffany Wells found when she attended a special needs camp. During the school year, Tiffany, who has cerebral palsy and asthma, played on the children's softball team, and a community bowling league. But because none of the children she played with were disabled, the competition wasn't always equal.

"Attending a special-needs camp allowed Tiffany to compete on more even ground, because all of the other kids were playing with some kind of disability," re-

ports her mother, Linda. The result? "Tiffany saw that she could actually win and come out on top."

One of the beauties of a special-needs camp is that the kids can learn and experience new things with others who have similar disabilities, says Cameron. "It's camaraderie. It gives them the confidence they need to try new things they might not have otherwise tried."

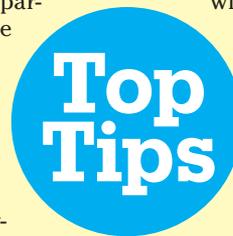
This was the case with Kim. When she first went to camp, she was afraid of the water.

## Traditional vs. special-needs camps

Camps designed for specific needs offer very specialized care, but some families would prefer to attend a traditional camp that caters to all children. Before enrolling your children in a camp, visit the facility and make sure the layout and surroundings meet your expectations and needs.

The following are a few things parents should keep in mind before choosing a traditional or special needs camp for their child:

- Is the camp accredited by an organization such as the American Camping Association ([www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org)) or the National Camp Association ([www.summer-camp.org](http://www.summer-camp.org))?
- Does it meet the organization's standards for kids with special needs, including facility and staffing requirements?
- What training and experience do the directors and counselors have in working with kids with a need similar to your child's?
- Are there other families you can contact whose children have attended the camp that might be willing to discuss their experience with you?



• What is the ratio of counselors to campers? For children with severe disabilities, the ratio should be at least one counselor for every three campers.

• What are the camp's health and safety procedures? What about the facility? Is there a registered nurse in residence? If not, who will disperse medication, if needed?

How close is the nearest hospital? Have emergency arrangements been made with a local hospital?

• Are they able to accommodate special dietary needs? Who will assist with feeding, toileting, or other activities of daily living?

• Can I visit the camp to see the program firsthand? Do they have sessions year-round?

• How do they ensure an inclusive environment when some activities aren't appropriate for your child? What alternatives are available?

• What about the camp's registration fee? (Keep in mind that expense and quality may not go hand-in-hand, because many specialized camps charge only a fraction of actual costs. Find out if financial aid is available.)



“She cried just getting her face wet,” reports her mother, Ruth. Through the encouragement of the trained staff, Kim slowly edged her way into the water.

“By summer’s end, she was jumping in the deep end and had received her first American Red Cross swimming certificate.”

Some see summer camp as an outlet for fun and recreation, but others use it to continue education and therapy goals, and teach life skills. This is accomplished one step at a time.

“It may mean being 10 minutes late for breakfast, so Timmy can learn to tie his shoes by himself,” says Haldeen.

Developing new skills isn’t the only thing kids glean at a special-needs camp. They learn about friendships, too. Last year, when Tiffany went to camp, there was a girl in her cabin with a more severe case of cerebral palsy than Tiffany’s. Because Tiffany had spent her whole life with people helping her, she naturally wanted a chance to help others.

“When we went to the dance, I got to push my new friend around in her chair,” says Tiffany. “I also got to help her eat.”

“One of the best things to be said about camp — any camp — is the opportunity for the children to make friends. And for children with special needs, it’s especially

important. They find out they are not alone, that there are others with similar disabilities,” says Cameron.

When camp is over, what do the children take with them? For some, new skills. For others, new friends. And for many more, simply a fond memory of having had a break from their normal routine.

Many campers look forward to returning year after year, says Haldeen.

“For many, we are their summer vacation. The minute they drive away, they are making plans to return next year.”

*Denise Yearian is the former editor of two parenting magazines and the mother of three children.*

# Teens and AUTISM

## *How to help your child transition into adulthood*

BY REBECCA MCKEE

**I**n speaking of autism spectrum disorder, I am choosing to focus on acceptance, realization, and preparedness when it comes to teenagers transitioning to adulthood, as they continue to live with unique needs. The major mountain to pass during this transition is coordinating independent living skills with a solid quality of life.

If your loved one is within the range of 14 to 17 years of age, now is the time to become aware while fostering an atmosphere of acceptance and realization. The sooner you begin this phase of parenting a teenager with unique qualities and special limitations, the better prepared you will be to act judiciously.

The trail towards proactively preparing independent living skills and an elevated quality of life includes the following landmarks: development and implementation of a Transition Individualized Education Plan, employment (and possibly higher education choices), adult benefits under the Office of Mental Health, and future planning.

An individualized transition plan will be a legal document that prescribes your child, and his team, towards the dedication of educational time for teaching important and crucial skills. It is always a great time to incorporate life skill goals onto the individu-

alized plan. Taking that turn from traditional towards functional academics may require families to take a breath — and begin acceptance. This is a less chaotic emotional state than being underprepared and feeling breathless.



Each individual deserves to experience a life of self-determined choices. One enjoyment in life is demonstrating the link between hard work and benefits. Gaining employment, and keeping a job, relies heavily on pro-social behaviors. One can be fantastic at map making, but unable to pass a job interview, work as a team player within

an office setting, or understand the social rules of employment.

Try to find your teen's naturally motivating hobby or talent. Can this be a money-making job? What socio-behavioral skills must be tackled before entry into the workforce? Will

he be able to dedicate time and attention towards achievement within a college setting?

For children, we carefully label certain profiles under the umbrella of special education as individuals with special needs. With maturity, support falls from the Department of Mental Health. Some children who receive specialized education become adults who need a wellness approach to mental health. This deems essential elements of future planning must be forefront for families.

Planning for one's future has various components. Skills that an adult needs to perform each day fall within the framework of social, behavioral, daily living, interpersonal relations, safety, and health of mental, physical, and emotional stabilities. Self-determination of living arrangements and life goals require help from a guiding team.

Use this moment of Autism Awareness to spark the fire of action. Attend informational meetings on transition. Implement the expertise of transition coordinators, and also legal and financial teams. Compose a safe and happy future for your loved one and others in the community. You are now aware.



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## PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

# Special-needs teens and dating

**Dear Sharon,**

We have a adolescent daughter whose special needs have placed her in special ed schools since she was a youngster. She is on the spectrum, and with unique attention is doing very well. That said, we recently found out that she has developed a strong attraction to a boy in her school and apparently he feels the same.

What advice do you have for us in terms of them “dating” or moving forward with a relationship? We were completely unprepared for this — even though she is 13 and it’s totally natural for her age group.

Any guidance would be appreciated.

here are some guidelines to keep in mind as you sort things through.

As you mentioned, 13 year olds naturally have attractions that become an important part of their lives. Almost all parents find it challenging to think about their child’s dating life, especially when it is beginning, and there are plenty of teens who are impulsive and have trouble thinking practically when it comes to handling young “romance.” There is often more parental involvement, patience, and care needed with a special-needs child who is navigating her first potential boyfriend, but the following general guidelines apply.

When new relationships are blossoming it is important for parents to do whatever is needed to be in ongoing contact and communication with their child. While doing so, if you can figure out ways to relax and have fun with your teen, potentially tense conversations are more likely to go smoothly.

Thirteen year old’s relationships vary widely. Some teens with crushes barely talk to each other, others do lots more. In most cases some common “controversial” topics that need to be discussed are when, if, and how to use social media wisely, how to sort through physical contact, if, when, and where to spend time alone with a special friend, and the importance of sharing questions and experiences with mom and dad.

Especially when parents are concerned they are often prone to offer lengthy opinions and suggestions. Adult perspectives are invaluable when a special-needs child starts to navigate the complicated world

of adolescent affection, but it is imperative that parents listen much more than they talk to their child. By listening calmly moms and dads can offer a safe environment for their child to sort things through. Parents can also get a sense of how things are going in the budding relationship and know when and if to offer support and guidance. Keeping dialogue flowing is probably the most important aspect of watching over a dating 13 year old; when things are secret there is sometimes more need for concern.

I believe the primary “rule” to keep in place is that parents know where their 13 year old is and who she is with at all times. Whenever possible it is also important to get to know the parents of your teen’s friend. Doing so can help create an ongoing watchful and caring presence. As you learn about the “rules” other parents keep in mind for their child, ideally you can think through guidance and supervision for your children together. If the other parent’s values differ from your own, then your home is likely to become the primary place for your child to visit with her friend. Meeting your child’s friend in your home or another location will give you helpful information as you think about the pros and cons of the relationship.

It is also good to check with the school to find out if a budding connection is enhancing or detracting from school work and other relationships.

This kind of monitoring is especially important for special-needs children who are often naively unaware of the potential pitfalls of adolescence and need adults to provide a framework to have things go well.



**Hi, concerned parents,**

The answer to your question is of course based on the specifics of your daughter’s overall social development, but

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, [www.PHPonline.org](http://www.PHPonline.org).

If you have a question about a challenge in your life (no issue is too big or too small) e-mail it to Dear Sharon at [Family@cnlocal.com](mailto:Family@cnlocal.com).

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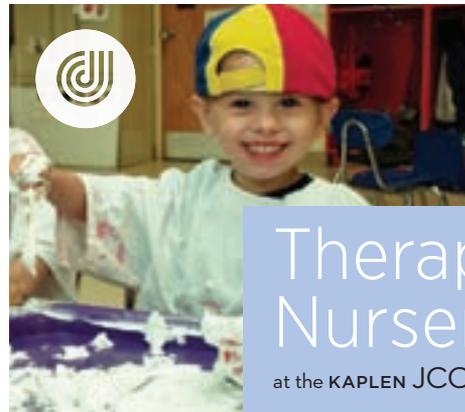
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# TO THE MOON AND BACK

## *Ten love lessons for the whole family*

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

If love is a language, then teach your family members to become conversant.

In Gary D. Chapman's book, "The Five Love Languages," people experience love in five ways. We experience love through words of affirmation, by spending quality time together, by receiving gifts, by performing acts of service, or through physical touch.

According to Chapman, every person on earth has a primary "language of love."

I understand what Chapman means when he says every person processes love uniquely. And I also think that there is much to be gained by playing around with all the love languages and encouraging members

of our families to do the same.

Which acts of love make you feel seen, appreciated, and cherished? What about your spouse and the kids? We can all learn to communicate what we like and need to our family members, so everyone can get their needs met and no one has to end up feeling misunderstood or neglected. Here are 10 ways to increase family affection at home:

**1 Set a loving example.** If you want your kids to have self-esteem so they can live the best lives possible, you have to teach them to love themselves first and foremost. Unfortunately, if the parents can't model this, the children are not likely to learn it, at least not from them. So, take good care of you first, and then take good

care of your brood. Love yourself and care for yourself so you can best love others and care for others.

**2 Personalize "I love you" for each family member.** Childhood nicknames can create affectionate moments in later years. If calling your child by a nickname will offend, even in private, then express the sentiment in whatever way the recipient will hear you best. Forget how you want to say it, and opt for what will garner the most positive response from your child.

**3 Don't forget, "We all love you."** Get in the habit of speaking for the whole family. A family is a "we," and love goes at the center of this complex constella-

## More ideas on showing your family some love

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

Need a few extra ideas on showing affection?

Sentiments to post around your home:

- Always tuck me in and kiss me good-night.
- I love you to the moon and back.
- Hug it out.
- Sweet dreams. Sleep tight. We love you. Good night.
- I love you for all that you are, all that

you have been, and all you are yet to be.

- There's no place like home.
- Where there is family, there is love.
- Love lives here.

Picture books about love and affection:

- "Guess How Much I Love You" by Sam McBranty, Illustrated by Anita Jeram



- "The Runaway Bunny" by Margaret Wise Brown, Illustrated by Clement Hurd

• "Goodnight Moon" by Margaret Wise Brown, Illustrated by Clement Hurd

• "Hug" by Jez Alborough

• "Love You Forever" by

Robert Munsch, Illustrated by Sheila McGraw

- "On The Night You Were Born" by Nancy Tillman



tion. This does not mean your toddler, teen, or college grad will always be eager to express emotion. So go ahead and be the voice of the whole family, as needed. Then, once you have spoken for all, let even a begrudging nod of agreement be enough.

**4 Love life and it will love your family back.** Your attitude towards life is either going to inspire or haunt your family. You may think you are being realistic, but if you constantly chorus that life isn't fair, that money doesn't grow on trees, and oh well, it could have been worse, your kids are going to grow up expecting life to let them down. Sure, life can be a bumpy ride sometimes, but never forget that it's unconditional love and positive encouragement from the people we love most that makes the challenges more bearable.

**5 Encourage family members to express what they need and want.** You can't give people what they need and want if they don't know what that is. Offer extra support to a family member who can't identify what she needs and wants. Don't let her always sacrifice her opinion for whatever the rest of the group wants. Every member of the family needs to know how to dig deep and express her own point of view. If you ask for wants and needs, you'll encourage every family member to figure theirs out.

**6 Spend quality time with each person in the family.** Love should never be a competition. My daughter loves to spend daddy-daughter time with my husband, and I'm glad she does. They have the things they like to do together, like watching slapstick comedy shows on TV or going out to their favorite breakfast place. And my daughter and I have our favorite things to do like watching chick flicks or going shopping. Be sure to carve out quality time with every family member, including your spouse.

**7 Teach kids to be caring to others.** Teach kids how to make thoughtful gestures that make the most of their talents. Or, get them out of the house and involved in assisting a good cause. If family members have trouble expressing care to each other, maybe they will have an easier time expressing affection and concern outside the family. If having you around seems to make them less charitable, then let another trusted adult guide them.

**8 Hug your family members at every age.** It has been scientifically proven that hugging lowers blood pressure and reduces stress, so what more of an excuse do you need? If your older kids try to brush you off, tell them you have to hug them — it's for their good health. And, of course, encourage kids to receive hugs when they are struggling emotionally, so they don't become habitual sufferers.

**9 Squeeze in small gestures of love.** Find little ways to express physical touch, especially for those family members who try to shirk it. Squeeze a shoulder, pat a knee, ruffle some hair, kiss your hand, and then pat their cheek. And mix it up a little. It's when affection becomes rote that teens roll their eyes at you and groan. So, get creative and say it like you mean it. Catch them when they least expect it, and they won't have time to duck away.

**10 Appreciate the attempt.** Remember that there is no such thing as perfect families. Also remind yourself that sometimes love will flow more readily and easily between family members than other times. And when a family member tries to do something genuinely kind or nice, try to appreciate the sentiment behind the gesture. Don't let them be teased or called names for expressing affection. Love is a sign of strength, not weakness.

When it comes to love and affection, you can't always get what you want, but if you try consistently, you will find there are plenty of opportunities in any given day to acknowledge and appreciate the most important people in your life.

*Christina Katz is an author and freelance journalist. She loves her family, her pets, the world, and what she does for a living. Her latest book is "Permission Granted, 45 Reasons To Micro-Publish."*



# Adolescent DATING and special needs

BY DR. RACHEL ANNUNZIATA

As adults, it may be humorous or perhaps mortifying to think back on our adolescent dating experiences. And as parents, it may be a process that we dread our children having to navigate. Starting to date is difficult for many reasons, but certainly the

challenges can be exacerbated for adolescents with special needs. It may be helpful to first consider what comprises dating for kids these days.

When I ask the college students that I teach about dating, the response is often a lovely mix of blushing, grinning, and lots of inconsistency. This may be a good ques-

tion to ask our children. A report by Child Trends Data Bank (2013) broadly defines dating as “spending time with current or potential romantic partners.” Within this context, specific challenges for adolescents with special needs will be discussed.

A teenager with a past or present medical illness may have experienced changes in her body that perhaps rise to significance with the onset of dating. It is not uncommon for adolescents to experience body-image concerns at this time centered on scarring, weight or other effects that may be the result of illness or treatment. Similarly, adolescents with special learning needs may also feel uncomfortable with how they might be perceived by dating partners. For example, a teenager with learning difficulties may worry that it will be hard to focus on a date or respond in the “right” way during conversation. Overall, adolescents with special needs may already face diminished self-esteem generally or related to specific factors; dating can feel more daunting because of this, but it can also influence

self-esteem depending on the results.

I remember very well one of the first times I worked with a patient who expressed such concerns. He had a long history of illness and expressed fears that friends and girls would reject him if they knew about his special needs and his ongoing illness-management requirements. And so, he didn't share any of this, but then on top of feeling anxious, he had trouble adhering to his treatment management when he was with peers. To his great chagrin, we role-played how to explain his needs to others, and we came up with ways to practice, such as first telling his closest friend. Years later, it makes me blush and grin when I hear about his successful dating life.

As adolescents consider this new type of relationship, it can be anxiety-provoking. Those with special needs have an increased risk for anxiety and depression; therefore the "stressor" of dating can certainly contribute to increases or the development of such symptoms. Sometimes, special needs are associated with a sense of being "behind" other children developmentally, perhaps related to the special need or because the child has missed opportunities to engage with peers socially. In this case, it may be especially anxiety-provoking if peers are showing a readiness to date that isn't shared. At a more basic level, they may feel like they don't know how to date. In these circumstances, parents and other loved ones can help by sharing information as well as their own experiences (although we may have to figure out ways to embed Facebook, texting, etc., into our stories to be relevant).

And of course parents of children with special needs may be anxious about this as well. Some literature suggests that parents may find it difficult to grant their special needs children independence. It can be so hard to imagine

your special needs child in many situations, much less dating! One of the best ways that we can help is to support his interest in dating and convey our happiness rather than fears, which could amplify his own. But, it is likely that many concerns parents have will be echoed by their children, and together families can prepare for such things. For example, if you are supposed to take medication while you are out, how will you make sure to do so? If your date asks why you have a tutor, how might you explain it? Such dialogue and practice may get a few eye-rolls, but will likely go a long way toward reassuring you and your child.

It is an extremely exciting time for an adolescent with a special need to realize that he is not different than his peers as he starts to enter the dating scene. As in so many aspects of parenting, the conversation, support, and preparation that we can offer during this time will be instrumental — even if it means revealing some of our most awkward, mortifying moments in a whole new light.

*Dr. Rachel Annunziato is an assistant professor of psychology at Fordham University. She has been conducting research and treating patients in a medical setting for more than a decade. Dr. Annunziato's research centers in pediatric psychology, health behaviors, and the transition to adulthood — with an eye toward health and improving quality of life. She has published more than 50 peer-reviewed publications on these topics and mentored dozens of students training in clinical psychology.*

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(212)- 598-6490  
www.hjd.med.nyu.edu

Services Provided: Diagnostics and Treatment, and Parenting Skills Training

## AUTISM

#### AHA-Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Association

303 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan  
(888) 918-9198  
www.ahany.org  
pats@ahany.org

Services Provided: educating parents of special needs children, support group.

#### Association in Metro Area for Autistic Children

25 West 17th Street, Ground Floor  
New York, NY 10011  
(212) 645-5005 (877) 645-5005  
www.amac.org  
info@amac.org

Services Provided: Case Manage, Community Education, Information and Referral, Treatment, Vocational Employment

Other: Residential Camp

#### Autism Science Foundation

419 Lafayette Street, Second Floor  
New York, NY 10003  
(646)-723-3977  
www.autismsciencefoundation.org  
contactus@autismsciencefoundation.org  
Services Provided: Information and Provides Funding for Medical Research

#### Autism Society of America

Queens Chapter  
188-83 85th Road  
Holliswood, NY 11423  
(718) 464-5735

Brooklyn Chapter  
224 Avenue S  
Brooklyn, NY 11223  
(718) 336-9533

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

#### Autism Speaks

1 East 33rd Street, Fourth Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
(212)-252-8584  
www.autismspeaks.org

Services Provided: Funds Autism Research and Information.

#### Brooklyn Autism Center Academy

111 Remsen Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 554-1027  
www.info@brooklynautismcenter.org

Services Provided: BAC is a private, not for profit school dedicated to providing high-quality education to children with autism and support to the general autism community.

#### Downtown Spectrum Parents, Parents of Individuals with Autism Support Group

363 Greenwich Street, Manhattan  
(212) 219-1195

#### Eden II Programs

150 Granite Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10303  
(718)-816-1422  
www.eden2.org

Services Provided: Education, Adult day programs, Family Support and Residential Care

#### QSAC, Quality of Life & Services for the Autistic Community

253 W. 35th Street, NY, NY 10001  
30-10 38th Street, Astoria, NY 11103  
And 2509 Broadway, Astoria, NY 11106  
New York 11106  
(718) 728-8476  
www.QSAC.COM  
QSACnyc@aol.com

Services Provided: Case Management,

Community Education, Information and Referral, Residential

Other: After school programs, behavior management, Day Habilitation, Family reimbursement, In-house/overnight respite, parent support group, Parent training, pre-school, Residential Habilitation, Special education itinerant Teacher

#### New York Families for Autistic Children, Inc.

95-16 Pitkin Avenue  
Ozone Park, NY 11417  
(718) 641-3441

Services Provided: NYFAC serves any family within New York that has a child with a developmental disability. Their doors are open to any family member, friend, professional, or student who wants to learn, to develop and to grow. Their motto: "Helping Parents..Help their children..One family at a time"

#### North Central Bronx Hospital

3424 Kossuth Avenue, room 15A11  
FSPDD at North Central Bronx Hospital  
(718) 519-4797

Ny-bronx@autismsocietyofamerica.org

Services Provided: Autism support group, provide information and support..

#### The McCarton Foundation and School

331 West 25th Street  
New York, NY 10001  
(212)-229-1715

www.mccartonfoundation.org

Services Provided: Education for children and Research Center

#### Thursday's Child, Inc.

7676 13th Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York 11228  
(718)-630-5100

www.thursdayschildinc.com

Services Provided: Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech, Special Instruction, Family Support Groups and Parent Workshops

## BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

#### Helen Keller Service of the Blind

57 Willoughby Street, Brooklyn  
(718) 522-2122  
www.helenkeller.org  
info@helenkeller.org

Services Provided: Free workshops, all ages for visually impaired.

#### Jewish Guild for the Blind

15 West 65th Street, New York NY 10023

*Continued on page 34*



# RIVENDELL SCHOOL

*Rivendell School provides a warm, creative environment where children develop independence, respect for each other, and a lifelong love of learning.*



A Montessori inclusion school serving children two to six years old for more than thirty years.

**277 3rd Avenue**  
(bet. Carroll & President Streets)  
**718-499-5667**

Rebecca School is a therapeutic day school for children ages 4 to 21, promoting the education and development of children with neurodevelopmental delays in relating and communicating, including PDD and autism.

Our curriculum is based upon the DIR® (Developmental Individual Differences Relationship-based) model of Dr. Stanley Greenspan, which considers the variations in individual motor and sensory processing systems and tailors each child's program to his or her specific needs. We are committed to celebrating each child's strengths and supporting their limitations.



## Learning Through Relationships

For tour information, contact Elizabeth O'Shea  
(212) 810-4120 | eoshea@rebeccaschool.org

40 East 30th Street NYC 10016  
www.rebeccaschool.org



## Winston Preparatory School Summer Program

*Education for the Individual*

- ◆ A unique individually designed program aimed to develop:
  - Reading Comprehension
  - Decoding and Spelling
  - Organizational Skills
  - Writing
  - Math
  - Study Skills
- ◆ Small class sizes for students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades
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646-638-2705 ext. 688 • summer@winstonprep.edu  
applications available online at www.winstonprep.edu

# New York City Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

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(212) 769-6200 (800) 284-4422

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

### National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI)

c/o New York Institute for Special Education  
999 Pelham Parkway, Bronx  
(718) 519-7000

[www.familyconnect.org](http://www.familyconnect.org)  
[jaynycnapvi@aol.com](mailto:jaynycnapvi@aol.com)

Services Provided: online forum, support group for parents with visually impaired children.

### Parents of Blind Children (National Federation of the Blind)

471 63rd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11220  
(718) 567-7821 (212) 222-1705

Individuals Served: Visual Impairments

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

### The Lighthouse National Center for Vision and Child Development

111 East 59th Street  
New York, NY 10022  
(800)829-0500

TTY/TDD: (212) 821-9713

[www.lighthouse.org](http://www.lighthouse.org)

Email: [info@lighthouse.org](mailto:info@lighthouse.org)

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral.

Other: Vision rehabilitation, low vision services, professional, Continuing education

## CAMPS

### Camp Acorn

P.O. Box 1383

Paramus, NJ 07653

973-471-2911 or [www.campacorn.org](http://www.campacorn.org)

### Camp Akeela

3 New King St.

White Plains, NY 20604

868-680-4744 or [www.campakeela.com](http://www.campakeela.com)

### Camp Chatterbox

Children's Specialized Hospital

150 New Providence Rd

Mountainside, NJ 07092

908-301-5451 [www.campchatterbox.org](http://www.campchatterbox.org)

### Camp Cold Brook

Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center

P.O. Box 305

83 Old Turnpike Road

Oldwick, NJ 08858

[www.shhrc.org](http://www.shhrc.org)

### Camp Daisy

Hardenburg Ln and Riva Ave

East Brunswick, NJ 08818

732-821-5195 or [www.ebrr.org/campdaisy.html](http://www.ebrr.org/campdaisy.html)

### Camp Haverim

JCC on the Palisades

411 East Clinton Ave

Tenafly, NJ 07670

201-569-7900 or [www.jcconthepalisades.org](http://www.jcconthepalisades.org)

### Camp Hope

845-225-2005 EXT 207 OR 1-866-223-6369 or

[WWW.CBFNY.ORG](http://WWW.CBFNY.ORG)

### Camp Horizons

127 Babcock Hill Road

South Windham, CT 06266

860-456-1032 or [www.camphorizons.org](http://www.camphorizons.org)

### Camp Huntington

56 Bruceville Rd

High Falls, NY 12440

866-514-5281 or [www.camphuntington.com](http://www.camphuntington.com)

### Camp Jotoni

141 S. Main St.

Manville, NJ 08835

908-725-8544 or [www.thearcofsomerset.org](http://www.thearcofsomerset.org)

### Camp Joy

250 Nimham Rd., Carmel

845 225-2005 x212 or [www.cbfny.org](http://www.cbfny.org)

### Camp Lee Mar

805 Redgate Rd

Dresher, PA 19025

215-658-1710 or [www.leemar.com](http://www.leemar.com)

### Camp Merry Heart

21 O'Brien Rd

Hackettstown, NJ 07840

908-852-3896 or [www.eastersealnj.org](http://www.eastersealnj.org)

### Camp Neveda

P.O. Box 158

910 Saddleback Rd

Stillwater, NJ 07875

973-383-2611

### Camp Northwood

132 State Route 365

Remsen, NY 13438-5700

315-831-3621 or [www.nwood.com](http://www.nwood.com)

### Camp Oakhurst

111 Monmouth Rd

Oakhurst, NJ 07755

732-531-0215 or [www.campchannel.com/campoakhurst](http://www.campchannel.com/campoakhurst)

### Camp Sun N Fun

1555 Getaway Blvd

West Deptford, NJ 08096

856-875-1499 or [www.thearco Gloucester.org](http://www.thearco Gloucester.org)

### Camp Sunshine and Camp Snowflake

1133 E. Ridgewood Ave

Saddle River County Park, Wild Duck Pond Area

Ridgewood, NJ 07450

201-652-1755 or [www.sunshine-snowflake.org/sunshinemain.htm](http://www.sunshine-snowflake.org/sunshinemain.htm)

### Camp Sunshine and Summer Fun Camp

Children's Specialized Hospital

150 New Providence Rd

Mountainside, NJ 07092

888-244-5373 ext 5484

### Camp Tikvah

JCC on the Palisades

411 East Clinton Ave

Tenafly, NJ 07670

201-569-7900 or [www.jcconthepalisades.org](http://www.jcconthepalisades.org)

### Frost Valley YMCA Camps

2000 Frost Valley Rd

Claryville, NY 12725

845-985-2291 or [www.frostvalley.org](http://www.frostvalley.org)

### Happiness is Camping Inc.

62 Sunset Lake Road

Blairstown, NJ 07825

908-362-6733 or [www.happinessiscamping.org](http://www.happinessiscamping.org)

### Harbor Haven Day Camp

1155 W. Chestnut St.

Suite G-1, Union NJ 07083

908-964-5411 or [www.hhdc.com](http://www.hhdc.com)

### Kiddie Keep Well Camp

35 Roosevelt Dr

Edison, NJ 08837

732-548-8542 or [www.kiddiekeepwell.org](http://www.kiddiekeepwell.org)

### Maplebrook Summer Program

5142 Route 22

Amenia, NY 12501

845-373-8191 or [www.maplebrookschool.org](http://www.maplebrookschool.org)

### Minding Miracles Learning Center

90 Spring Hill Rd

Matawan, NJ 07747

732-316-4884 or [www.mindingmiracles.net](http://www.mindingmiracles.net)

### New Jersey Camp Jaycee

985 Livingston Ave

North Brunswick, NJ 08902

732-246-2525 or [www.campjaycee.org](http://www.campjaycee.org)

*Continued on page 36*

# We're here to help.

Beds with safety rail protection from 8" to 36"  
Articulation and Hi-Lo features available.



*SleepSafe II® - Medium Bed  
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*SleepSafe® - Low Bed  
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Multi-sensory reading and math  
**Tutoring for kids with learning disabilities**  
GRADES K-8

- Taught by a NYS certified special education teacher
  - Orton-Gillingham approach to reading
  - Research based, hands-on math curriculum
- Methods to improve memory, attention, and problem solving skills
  - Private and small group tutoring in Manhattan

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**www.luminouslearning.com**

## Riverdale Audiology

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Serving patients from 9 days old and up

It takes skill to evaluate the hearing of children with developmental issues or learning challenges.

Normal Hearing screenings available; for day care, school or camp admission **27 Years experience**

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**(718) 543-4333** • [www.riverdaleaudiology.com](http://www.riverdaleaudiology.com)  
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OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

### Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center

Rose F. Kennedy University Center  
for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Providing care for more than Half a Century

1410 Pelham Parkway South - Bronx, New York 10461  
Telephone: (718) 430-8500  
[www.einstein.yu.edu/centers/childrens-evaluation-rehabilitation/](http://www.einstein.yu.edu/centers/childrens-evaluation-rehabilitation/)

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or follow us on

Facebook Search: NYParenting

# New York City Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

*Continued from page 34*

### **Our Victory Day Camp**

46 Vineyard Lane  
Stamford, CT 06902  
203-329-3394 or [www.ourvictory.com](http://www.ourvictory.com)

### **Rainbow Summer Day Program**

201-343-0322 ext 270 or [www.archbergenpassaic.org/about.html](http://www.archbergenpassaic.org/about.html)

### **Ramapo For Children**

Rhinebeck Campus  
P.O. Box 266 Rt. 52 Salisbury Turnpike  
Rhinebeck, NY 12572  
845-878-8403 or [www.ramapoforchildren.org](http://www.ramapoforchildren.org)

### **Round Lake Camp**

119 Woods Rd  
Lakewood, PA 18439  
570-798-2551 or [www.roundlakecamp.org](http://www.roundlakecamp.org)

### **Summit Camp & Travel**

322 Route 46 West, Suite 210  
Parsippany, NJ 07054  
800-323-9908 or [www.summitcamp.com](http://www.summitcamp.com)

### **Southampton Fresh Air Home**

36 Barkers Island Rd  
Southampton NY 11968  
631-283-5847 or [www.sfah.org](http://www.sfah.org)

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## CEREBRAL PALSEY

### **United Cerebral Palsy of New York City**

80 Maiden Lane  
New York, NY 10038  
(212) 683-6700 or [www.ucpnyc.org](http://www.ucpnyc.org)

Services Provided: Assistive Tech Equipment, Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Residential, Treatment, Vocational/Employment

Other: Day Treatment, Day Habilitation, Early Intervention

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## DISABILITY GROUPS

### **Adults and Children with Learning & Developmental Disabilities, Inc.**

807 South Oyster Bay Road  
Bethpage, NY 11714  
(516)-822-0028

Services Provided: Educational Services, Family Support Services, Day Services, Homes and Independent Living and Health Care Providers.

### **Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID)**

27 Smith Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 998-3000/TTY/TDD  
(718)998-7406  
[www.bcid.org](http://www.bcid.org)

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Vocational Employment

### **Catholic Charities Office for the Handicapped**

191 Joralemon Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 722-6000  
[www.ccbq.org](http://www.ccbq.org)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

### **Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York**

841 Broadway  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 674-2300  
TTY/TDD: (212) 674-5619  
[www.cidny.org](http://www.cidny.org)

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

### **Children's Aid Society**

150 E. 45th Street  
New York, NY 10017  
(212) 949-4800

Services Provided: serves New York's neediest children and their families at more than 45 locations in the 5 boroughs and Westchester County. Provides comprehensive support for children in need, from birth to young adulthood, and for their families, to fill the gaps between what children have and what they need to thrive.

### **Community Service Society**

105 East 22nd Street, Room 303  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 254-8900  
[www.cssny.org](http://www.cssny.org)

Services Provided: Case Management, Information and Referral

### **Developmental Disabilities Center, St. Luke's Hospital**

1000 Tenth Avenue  
New York, NY 10019  
(212) 523-6230

Other: Developmental assessments and evaluations.

### **Disabled and Alone/Life Services for the Handicapped**

61 Broadway, Suite 510  
New York, NY 10006  
(800) 995-0066

[www.diabledandalone.org](http://www.diabledandalone.org)

Services Provided: Assistive Tech Equipment, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Individual Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

### **Early Childhood Center Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center**

1731 Seminole Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10461  
(718) 430-8900

Services Provided: Treatment  
Other: Parent Support Groups

### **Early Childhood Direction Center**

New York Presbyterian Hospital  
435 East 70th Street  
New York, NY 10021  
(212) 746-6175

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy  
Other: Preschool programs, transportation, medical, educational and Social services, evaluation and assessment services, parent education programs and resources.

### **Early Childhood Direction Center**

1UCP of NYC, Inc, SHARE Center  
60 Lawrence Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11230  
(718) 437-3794

Services Provided: The Early Childhood Direction Centers (ECDCs) provide information about programs and services for young children, ages birth through 5, who have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities and help families obtain services for their children.

### **Easter Seals New York**

40 W 37th Street, Suite 503  
New York, NY 10018  
(212)-220-2290

[www.ny.easter-seals.org](http://www.ny.easter-seals.org)

Service Provided: Medical Rehabilitation, Inclusive Child Care, Camping and Recreational, Education and Recreational Services.

### **EIHAB Children's Services**

222-40 96th Avenue  
Queens Village, NY 11429  
(718)465-8833

Services Provided: Connects disabled children to service providers, advocates, helps with entitlements, Medicaid waivers, financial assistance, care coordination.

### **Fisher Landau Center for the Treatment of Learning Disabilities**

*Continued on page 38*

# Autism/Behavioral Consulting Services

- Staff Training
- School-Based Consultation
- FBA Assessment and BIP Implementation
- ABA and Verbal Behavior Training Techniques
- Behavior Management Strategies
- Home/School Intensive Behavior Intervention Services
- Crisis Intervention and Prevention
- Home-Based Services and Parent Education Training

**\$75 off**  
consultation

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**(516) 851-8330**



## Dr. Helene H. Agatstein Educational Consultant, Inc.

- Has assisted parents in obtaining mandated services from their children's school districts since 1988
- Achieved both Doctorate and Master's degrees in Special Education
- Represents parents at Superintendent's Suspension Hearings for disabled youngsters

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**helene@agatstein.com**

## BAKSHI LAW

### C. Lara Bakshi

Special Needs Attorney • Special Education Specialist

Providing a clear road map of the law and zealously advocating for you and your child.

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to set up a consultation  
After hours call 917-244-6133

**lara.bakshi@gmail.com**

Servicing Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk Counties), NYC Boroughs, Westchester, Rockland and Upstate NY



## West End Day is more than a school:

it is a community of students, staff and parents who have a shared vision. We create a safe haven for learning, strive to be a trusted partner for parents and foster the development of resiliency in children to build a strong foundation for their lifelong success.

### Together we:

- Establish an individualized and challenging educational program that supports our bright students and their unique learning styles.
- Cultivate our students' inner strengths by recognizing the impact emotions have on learning.
- Provide a flexible atmosphere, where children feel comfortable meeting high expectations.
- Promote, nurture and engage relationships, because they are central to our well-being.
- Ensure that families feel valued, supported and understood.

255 West 71st Street, New York, NY 10023

Tel: (212) 873-5708

[www.westenddayschool.org](http://www.westenddayschool.org)



ProxTalker  
LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE



The ProxTalker for children who can't talk just got easier to get for your child!

Developed by a parent of a nonverbal child with autism, the Logan ProxTalker has a proven track record in supporting communication for children who cannot talk. It takes objects and pictures and makes them talk, giving children a "voice" often for the first time!



- NOW: NY Medicaid Approved!
- Your speech therapist from NY DOE or District 75 can help you with trying the devices with your child - and we offer FREE training to your school teachers and therapists
- Available in many languages
- FREE app - download the ProxTalker App to your iPad to make communication boards for your child
- Call us toll free now to learn about our special offer 1-877-455-7769

Visit [www.proxtalker.com](http://www.proxtalker.com) today for more information or call us to arrange a trial of the Logan ProxTalker for your child.

# New York City Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

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**Rouso Building, Second Floor**  
1165 Morris Park Avenue  
Bronx, New York 10461  
(718)-430-3900  
[www.einstein.yu.edu/cerc](http://www.einstein.yu.edu/cerc)

Services Provided: Health, Education and Vocational Rehabilitation

### **Guild for Exceptional Children**

260 68th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11220  
(718) 833-6633  
[www.gecbklyn.com](http://www.gecbklyn.com)  
[mikefer@gecbklyn.org](mailto:mikefer@gecbklyn.org)

Services Provided: Early childhood Education, Day Habilitation Program, Other specialized services

### **Heartshare Human Services**

12 Metro Tech Center, 29th floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 422-4200  
[www.heartshare.org](http://www.heartshare.org)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Residential, Treatment

### **International Center for the Disabled**

340 East 24th Street  
New York, NY 10010  
(212)-585-6000  
[www.icdnyc.org](http://www.icdnyc.org)

Service Provided: Medical, Rehabilitation and Mental.

### **Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, Inc.**

135 West 50th Street  
New York, NY 10020  
(212)582-9100  
(800)523-2769  
[www.jbfcs.org](http://www.jbfcs.org)

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

### **Korean-American Association for Rehabilitation of the Disabled**

35-20 147th Street,  
Annex 2F  
Flushing, NY 11354  
(718) 445-3929

Individuals Served: All Developmental Disabilities

### **Learning Disabilities Association of New York City**

27 West 20th Street, Room 304  
New York, NY 10128  
(212) 645-6730  
[www.ldanyc.org](http://www.ldanyc.org)

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

### **Living Above Disorder Shared Journeys Support group**

Clinton Hill Public Library  
380 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn  
(646) 481-6570  
[www.livingabovedisorder.org](http://www.livingabovedisorder.org)  
[info@livingabovedisorder.org](mailto:info@livingabovedisorder.org)

Services Provided: support for special needs children/adults, social workshops.

### **Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities**

100 Gold Street, New York, NY 10038  
(212) 788-2830  
[www.nyc.gov/mopd](http://www.nyc.gov/mopd)

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

### **Metro New York Developmental Disabilities Services Office**

75 Morton Street,  
New York, NY 10014  
(212) 229-3000  
[www.cs.stste.ny.us](http://www.cs.stste.ny.us)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Individual/Case Advocacy, Residential, Treatment, Vocational Employment

### **My Time, Inc.**

9719 Flatlands avenue, Room 103  
Other Location: 1312 E8th street, Brooklyn  
(718) 251-0527  
[www.mytimeinc.org](http://www.mytimeinc.org)  
[infor@mytime.org](mailto:infor@mytime.org)

Services provided: Support group for parents of special needs children.

### **National Center for Learning Disabilities**

381 Park Avenue South, Suite 1401  
New York, NY 10016  
(212)-545-7510

Service Provided: Information and Promotes Research and Programs.

### **New York City Administration for Children's Services**

150 William Street  
New York, NY 10038  
(212) 341-0900

Services Provided: Protects New York City's children from abuse and neglect. Provides neighborhood based services to help ensure children grow up in safe, permanent homes with strong families. Helps families in need through counseling, referrals to drug rehabilitation programs and other preventive services.

### **New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

[www.nyc.gov/health](http://www.nyc.gov/health)  
New York City Department of Social Services  
250 Church Street  
New York, NY 10013  
(877)472-8411

Services Provided: Information and Referral  
Other: Services vary by county

### **Partnership with Children**

50 Court Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(212) 689-9500

Services Provided: Partnership with Children is a not-for-profit organization that provides emotional and social support to at-risk children so that they can succeed in school, in society and in their lives.

### **Staten Island Mental Health Society, Inc.**

669 Castleton Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10301  
(718)-442-2225  
[www.simhs.org](http://www.simhs.org)

Service Provided: Clinical and Education

### **The Arc- AHRC New York City Chapter**

83 Maiden Lane  
New York, NY 10038  
(212)-780-2500  
[www.ahrnyc.org](http://www.ahrnyc.org)

Services Provided: Education, Clinical, and Adult Day Services.

### **YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities**

460 West 34th Street, 11th floor  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 563-7474  
TTY/TDD: (212) 290-2787  
[www.yai.org](http://www.yai.org)  
[link@yai.org](mailto:link@yai.org)

Services Provided: Assistive Tech Equipment, Case Management, information and Referral, Residential Treatment, Vocational/Employment.

Other: Early Intervention, preschool, health care, Crisis intervention family services, clinical services. Day programs, recreation and camping.

## DOWN SYNDROME

### **Association for Children with Down Syndrome, Inc.**

4 Fern Place, Plainview, NY 11803  
Other location: 2616 Martin Avenue  
Bellmore, NY 11710  
(516) 933-4700

*Continued on page 40*

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social skills

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Nursing

Residential

FAMILY OF

Support

Challenging BEHAVIORS

FAMILY OF

Support

Quality of Life

SPEECH Pathologists

PT THERAPEUTIC

ENVIRONMENT

Dietary NEEDS

engaging

AVIORS

SCHOOL

Assistive Technology

Communication Skills

Social Skills

Woods is a leading advocacy and service organization for children and adults with exceptional challenges and complex needs. Woods operates a continuum of residential and day program supports for individuals diagnosed with autism, intellectual disability, developmental disability, brain-injury, behavioral challenges and severe emotional disorders.



Admissions Office  
800-782-3646  
admissions@woods.org  
www.woods.org

# New York City Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

*Continued from page 38*

[www.ACDS.org](http://www.ACDS.org)  
[infor@ACDS.org](mailto:infor@ACDS.org)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Treatment

Other: Recreation Program

### National Down Syndrome Society

666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012  
(212) 460-9330 (800) 221-4602

Services Provided: Advocate for the value, acceptance and inclusion of people with Down Syndrome.

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## EDUCATION

### Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services Corp.

1360 Fulton Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11216  
(718) 636-1155

Services Provided: Community Education, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

Other: HIV Advocacy and HIV Custody Planning.

### BOLD - The Bronx Organization for the Learning Disabled in New York

2885 St. Theresa Avenue  
Bronx, New York 10461  
(718) 430-0981  
[www.boldny.org](http://www.boldny.org)

Services Provided: Education, speech therapy, occupational therapy, psychological assessments and other services.

### Early Childhood Direction Center Variety Pre-Schoolers Workshop

47 Humphrey Drive  
Syosset, NY 11791  
(516) 921-7171 (800) 933-8779  
[www.vclc.org](http://www.vclc.org)

Individuals Served: Children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities

Services Provided: Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy,

Other: Preschool programs, transportation, Medical, educational and social services, evaluation and assessment services, parent education programs and resources.

### East River Child Development Center

577 Grand Street

New York, NY 10002

(212) 254-7300  
[www.eastrivercdc.org](http://www.eastrivercdc.org)

Services Provided: A Non-Profit, Family-Centered, Community based Preschool Program offering an array of Educational and Therapeutic services to children with special need between the ages of 3 and 5. These special needs include specialized instruction, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, assistive technology, and parent education.

### Shield Institute for the Mentally Retarded and Developmentally Disabled

144-61 Roosevelt Avenue  
Flushing, NY 11354  
(718) 939-8700  
[www.shield.org](http://www.shield.org)

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment, Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Treatment.

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## EPILEPSY

### ANIBIC (Association for Neurologically Impaired Brain Injured Children)

61-35 220th Street, Oakland Gardens  
(718) 423-9550  
[www.anibic.org](http://www.anibic.org)

Services Provided: Physical activities for mentally disabled children.

### Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York

257 Park Avenue South, Suite 302  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 677-8550  
[www.epilepsyinstitute.org](http://www.epilepsyinstitute.org)

Services Provided: The Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York is a non-profit social service organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of people with Epilepsy and their families.

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## GENERAL/MULTIPLE SERVICES PROVIDED

### Adoption Crossroads

444 East 76th Street, Manhattan  
(212) 988-0110  
[www.adoptioncrossroads.org](http://www.adoptioncrossroads.org)  
[joesoll@adoptionheling.org](mailto:joesoll@adoptionheling.org)

Services Provided: Educate parents on handling adopted children.

### Advocates for Children of New

### York

151 West 30th Street, 5th floor  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 947-9779

[www.advocatesforchildren.org](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org)

Other: Advocate for educational rights in the public school

### Rose F. Kennedy Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center (CERC)

Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University  
1410 Pelham Parkway South  
Bronx, New York 10461  
(718) 430-8500  
[www.einstein.yu.edu/centers/cerc](http://www.einstein.yu.edu/centers/cerc)

Services Provided: CERC is a voluntary nonsectarian agency that provides interdisciplinary diagnostic and therapeutic clinical services for infants, children, adolescents and adults with developmental, physical, language and learning difficulties. CERC is part of the Rose F. Kennedy University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service (UCEDD), and as such, is one of 67 federally designated regional centers that conducts interdisciplinary training, provides exemplary clinical services, and conducts research in the field of developmental disabilities and creates a bridge between universities and the community through community outreach and direct consumer involvement.

### Association for the Help of Retarded Children (AHRC)

83 Maiden Lane, New York, NY 10038  
(212) 780-2500  
TTY/TDD (800) 662-1220  
[www.ahrcnyc.org/](http://www.ahrcnyc.org/)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual Case Advocacy Legal Advocacy, Residential, Vocational/Employment  
Other: Camps, school and respite

### Board of Visitors, Staten Island Developmental Center

1150 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
(718) 983-5200

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy

### Brooklyn Bureau of Community Services

285 Schermerhorn Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11217  
(718) 310-5600  
[www.bbc.org](http://www.bbc.org)

Services Provided: Case Management,

*Continued on page 42*

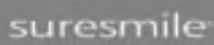


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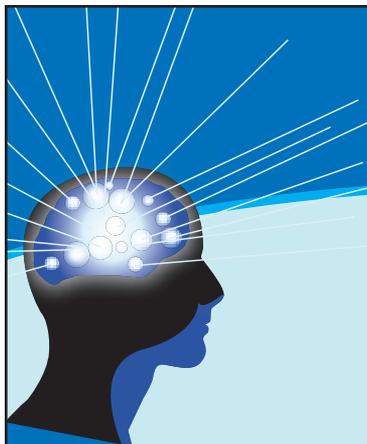
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**NEW COMMON CORE ACADEMIC STANDARDS** put more pressure on students and may make mild learning problems more pronounced. Test accommodations may be necessary to compensate for attention deficit, slow reading or other mild delays.

**CRITICAL DIAGNOSTIC TESTING** for ADHD, Autism, Asperger's, Learning Disability, Auditory Processing, Dyslexia, Language Disorders, Social-Emotional Developmental Delays, Seizures, Concussion and Traumatic Brain Injury.

**DETECT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES** that make learning and test taking difficult. Neuropsychologists can recommend IEP services, specialized school placement, test accommodations (extra time) and other ways of improving learning and grades.

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[www.NeuropsychNYC.com](http://www.NeuropsychNYC.com)

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- Don't waste another year, don't let your child continue struggling in school. Call us now to get an appointment within a week.

# New York City Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

*Continued from page 40*

Community Education, Future Planning, Treatment, Vocational Employment

Other: Job training and placement services, Home and Community Based Waiver Services, Comprehensive Medical Case Management, Parent Support Group

### Brooklyn Children's Center

1819 Bergen Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11233  
(718) 221-4500

Services Provided: Inpatient Hospital Day, Day Treatment Program, Parent Advocate Services, Family Support Group. The Brooklyn Children's (BCC) Mission is to promote an environment for the Development of healthy children and adolescents.

### Brooklyn Parent Advocacy Network

279 East 57th Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11203  
(718) 629-6299

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment, Case Management, Community Education, Future Planning, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy, Residential, Vocational/Employment

Other: HIV/AIDS, homeless housing, food program, respite, after school and day care.

### Bronx Children's Psychiatric Center

1000 Waters Place  
Bronx, NY 10461  
(718) 239-3639

Services Provided: Community Day Treatment, Intensive Case Management, Crisis Intervention

### Greater New York Chapter of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

515 Madison Avenue, 20th Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
(212) 353-8353

[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral.

### Institute for Community Living Brooklyn Family Resource Center

2581 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn  
New York, NY 10022  
(718) 290-8100, x. 4145  
(718) 495-8298

[www.iclinc.net](http://www.iclinc.net)  
[info@iclinc.net](mailto:info@iclinc.net)

Services Provided: Clinical consultation, counseling, workshops, and after-school programs for special needs children.

### Maidstone Foundation

1225 Broadway, 9th floor  
New York, NY 10001

(212) 889-5760  
[mariette33@aol.com](mailto:mariette33@aol.com)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral, Vocational Employment

Other: Help people with unusual problems seek the proper help that is needed for that problem and also provide education and training.

### New Alternatives for Children

37 West 26th Street  
New York, NY 10010  
(212)696-1550

Services Provided: NAC provides real help and real hope to thousands of children with disabilities and chronic illnesses and their families throughout NYC. Through an integrated continuum of health and social services, NAC keeps children safe from abuse or neglect and works with birth, foster and adoptive families to keep children out of institutions and in nurturing, loving homes.

### Queens Children's Psychiatric Center

74-03 Commonwealth Blvd.  
Bellerose, NY 11426  
(718)264-4500

Services Provided: QCPC serves seriously emotionally disturbed children and adolescents from ages 5-18 in a range of programs including inpatient, hospitalization, day treatment, intensive case management.

### Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

116 East 16th Street  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 677-4650, [infor@resourcesnyc.org](mailto:infor@resourcesnyc.org)  
[www.resourcesnyc.org](http://www.resourcesnyc.org)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and Referral Case Advocacy

Other: Free workshop series with a focus in issues related to early intervention, preschool, school-age special education, transition to adulthood and community resources.

Also publishes several directories.

### Services for the Underserved

305 Seventh Avenue 10th floor  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 633-6900

Services Provided: SUS is a non-profit organization that provides housing, services and support for individuals with special needs to live with dignity in the community, direct their own lives and attain personal fulfillment.

### Sinergia, Inc.

2082 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10035  
(212) 643-2840

[www.sinergiany.org](http://www.sinergiany.org)  
[information@sinergia.org](mailto:information@sinergia.org)

**Residential Office:**

902 Amsterdam Ave.  
New York, NY (212) 678-4700

Services Provided: Case Management, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy, Residential, Vocational/Employment

### Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office

1150 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
(718) 983-5200

Services Provided: Care Management, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy, Residential, Treatment

### Staten Island Division, March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

110 McClean Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10305  
(718) 981-3000  
[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)

Individuals Served: All Developmental Disabilities

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral

### Staten Island Mental Health Society, Inc.

669 Castleton Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10301  
(718) 442-2225

Service Provided: Offers mental health and related services to children and adolescents and their families.

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## HEARING IMPAIRED

### Center for Hearing and Communications

50 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004  
(917) 305-7700 (917) 305-7999  
TTY/TDD: (917) 305-7999  
[www.chchearing.org](http://www.chchearing.org)  
[info@chchearing.org](mailto:info@chchearing.org)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, Information and referral, Individual case Advocacy

### Lexington School for the Deaf

Center for the Deaf  
26-26 75th Street  
East Elmhurst, NY 11370  
(718)350-3300  
TTY/TDD: (718) 350-3056  
[www.lexnyc.org](http://www.lexnyc.org)  
[generalinfo@lexnyc.org](mailto:generalinfo@lexnyc.org)

# New York City Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment, Case Management, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Vocational/ Employment.

Other: Mental Health Services including early intervention program, hearing and speech services and a school for the deaf.

### The Children's Hearing Institute

380 2nd Avenue, 9th floor  
New York, NY 10010  
(646) 438-7802

[www.childrenshearing.org](http://www.childrenshearing.org)

Services Provided: The institute provides funding for research, educational support, and other programs relating to the restoration of hearing for infants and children with hearing loss or profound deafness. While CHI currently focuses much of their efforts on children who are deaf and can be helped with cochlear implant technology, they conduct research related to causes of deafness that ultimately can benefit people of all ages.

## LEGAL SERVICES

### Lawyers for Children, Inc.

110 Lafayette Street, 8th floor  
New York, NY 10013  
(800) 244-2540

[www.lawyersforchildren.com](http://www.lawyersforchildren.com)

Services Provided: Future Planning, Information and Referral, Legal Advocacy

### Legal Aid Society of New York City

199 Water Street  
New York, NY 10038

(212) 577-3346 (347) 245-5132  
[www.legal-aid.org](http://www.legal-aid.org)

Individuals Served: All Developmental Disabilities

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy

Other: Advocacy training, and systems advocacy

### MFY Legal Services, Inc.

299 Broadway, 4th floor  
New York, NY 10007  
(212) 417-3700

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy.

### New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Inc.

151 West 30th Street, 11th floor  
New York, NY 10001-4007  
(212) 244-4664  
[www.nylpi.org](http://www.nylpi.org)

Services Provided: Community Education, Information and Referral, Individual/Case Advocacy, Legal Advocacy.

## MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

### Muscular Dystrophy Association

11 East 44th Street 17th floor  
New York, NY 10017  
(212) 682-5272  
[www.mda.org](http://www.mda.org)

Services Provided: MDA is the gateway to infor-

mation, resources and specialized health care for individuals and families coping with muscle disease. MDA's offices serve every community through a vast program of clinics, support groups, summer camps, equipment loans and much more.

## SENSORY THERAPY

### Kouli's OT Sensory Gym

3434 Tibbett Avenue Bronx, NY 10463  
917-405-3044 or [Koulisotsensorygym.com](http://Koulisotsensorygym.com)

Kouli's OT/ Sensory Gym is a pediatric therapy center located in Riverdale, NY (Bronx), created by Kouli E Nalpantidis, who believes children's therapy services are best provided in a fun, energetic and caring environment where the needs of the child come first. At Kouli's OT/ Sensory Gym your child will receive individualized attention from a dedicated and professional therapists who will work with you to determine the best approach to your child's special needs. The Gym services children through Early Intervention (EI - with approval from City Official), Preschool, School age (CSE with RSA Letter) and privately.

## TOURETTE SYNDROME

### National Tourette Syndrome Association

42-40 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361-2820  
(718) 2242999  
[www.tourette-syndrome.com](http://www.tourette-syndrome.com)

Services Provided: Community education, information and referral.

# Developmental Disabilities Service Offices

*Information courtesy of the NYS office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.*

### New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, New York 12229  
Information Line 1-(866)-946-9733  
TTY:(866) 933-4889  
[www.omr.state.ny.us](http://www.omr.state.ny.us)

### Developmental Disabilities Service Offices by borough:

#### (BROOKLYN)

Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Services Office  
888 Fountain Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11208  
Phone: (718) 642-6000  
Fax: (718) 642-6282

#### (LONG ISLAND)

### Long Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office

45 Mall Drive  
Commack, NY 11725  
Phone: (631) 493-1700  
Fax: (631) 493-1803

#### (MANHATTAN & THE BRONX)

### Metro NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office

75 Morton Street  
New York, NY 10014  
Phone: (212) 229-3000  
Fax: (212) 924-0580

#### (QUEENS)

Bernard M. Fineson Developmental

### Disabilities Services Office

80-45 Winchester Boulevard  
Building 12  
Queens Village, NY 11427  
Phone: (718) 217-4242  
Fax: (718) 217-4724

#### (STATEN ISLAND)

### Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office

1150 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
Phone: (718) 983-5200  
Fax: (718) 983-9768

### Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities

1050 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
Phone: (718) 494-0600  
Fax: (718) 698-3803

# Long Island Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

### ADVOCACY

#### Association for the Help of Retarded Children

Children of Nassau County  
189 Wheatley Road  
Brookville, NY 11545  
(516) 626-1000  
[www.ahrc.org/](http://www.ahrc.org/)

Services Provided: Case Management, Community Education, future planning, Information and Referral, residential, treatment, vocational/employment

#### Association for the Help of Retarded Children (AHRC)

Suffolk County  
2900 Veterans Memorial Highway  
Bohemia, NY 11716-1193  
(631) 585-0100  
[www.ahrCsuffolk.org](http://www.ahrCsuffolk.org)

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/Equipment, Community Education, Future planning, Information and referral, residential, treatment, vocational/employment

#### Long Island Advocacy Center

999 Herricks Road  
New Hyde Park, NY 11040  
(516) 248-2222

Services Provided: Information and referral, Individual/case advocacy, legal advocacy

#### Long Island Center for Independent Living

3601 Hempstead Turnpike, Suite 312  
Levittown, NY 11756  
(516) 796-0144  
TTY: 516-796-0135  
[www.liril.net](http://www.liril.net)

The Long Island Center for Independent Living, Inc. is a provider of the NYS Medicaid Funded Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program, this unique program allows consumers qualified for Personal Care to recruit, hire & train their own caregivers. In the case of a parent of a child with special needs this program would give them control over who was providing the care for their child.

#### Long Island Chapter March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

325 Crossways Park Drive  
Woodbury, NY 11797

(516) 496-2100

Services Provided: Community education, information and referral, individual/case advocacy.

Other: Specializing in community education

#### Nassau County Commission on Human Rights

240 Old Country Road  
Mineola, NY 11501  
(516) 571-3662  
[www.nassaucountyny.gov](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov)

Services Provided: Community education, Information and referral, individual/case advocacy, legal advocacy

#### Nassau County Department of Social Services

60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd.  
Uniondale, NY 11553  
(516) 227-8000  
[www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/dss/managedC.htm](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/dss/managedC.htm)

Services Provided: Information and referral

#### Nassau County Medical Center, Division of Genetics, Department of Pediatrics

2201 Hempstead Turnpike  
East Meadow, NY 11554  
(516) 572-5717

Services Provided: Community education, Future planning, information and referral, treatment.

#### Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc.

One Helen Keller Way,  
Hempstead, NY 11550  
(516) 292-8100  
[www.nslawservices.org](http://www.nslawservices.org)

Services Provided: This unit is funded by the Committee on Quality of Care and Advocacy for persons with developmental disabilities to provide free advocacy and legal services to this population.

#### Suffolk Early Childhood Direction Center

Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI)  
99 Hollywood Drive  
Smithtown, NY 11787  
(631) 863-2600

Services Provided: Information and referral

### AUTISM

#### Asperger's Syndrome and Higher-Functioning Autism Association of New York

189 Wheatley Road  
Brookville, NY 11545  
(888) 918-9198  
[www.ahany.org](http://www.ahany.org)

Services Provided: Provides support and education for families, individuals and professionals affected by Asperger's Syndrome, high-functioning autism and other pervasive developmental disorders.

#### Autism Speaks, Inc.

380 Oakwood Rd.  
Huntington Station  
(631) 521-7853  
[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

#### Kids Success, Inc.

2950 Hempstead Turnpike  
Levittown, NY 11756  
(516) 796-0989  
[www.all4kidsuccess.com](http://www.all4kidsuccess.com)

Services Provided: Educational and intervention services for parents, educators, schools, and caregivers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADD/ADHD Learning Disabilities, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders.

#### Matt and Debrea Cody Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Stony Brook University, 5 Medical Dr.,  
Port Jefferson Station  
(631) 632-8844  
[www.codycenter.org](http://www.codycenter.org)

#### Quality Services for the Autism Community (QSAC)

56-37 188th Street  
Fresh Meadows, NY 11365  
(718) 357-4650  
[www.qsac.com](http://www.qsac.com)

Services Provided: QSAC is an award winning non-profit organization dedicated to providing services to persons with autism and/or pervasive disorder (PDD) throughout New York City and Long Island.

#### United Supports For Autism

283 Commack Rd.  
Commack

# Long Island Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

(516) 848-8551  
www.unitedsupportsforspecialneeds.org  
Contact: Natalia Appenzeller, Ph. D.

### CAMPS

#### Camp Akeela

3 New King St.  
White Plains, NY 20604  
868-680-4744 or www.campakeela.com

#### Camp Horizons

127 Babcock Hill Road  
South Windham, CT 06266  
860-456-1032 or www.camphorizons.org

#### Camp Horseability

P.O. Box 410-1  
Old Westbury, NY 11568  
516-333-6151 or www.horseability.org

#### Camp Huntington

56 Bruceville Rd  
High Falls, NY 12440  
866-514-5281 or www.camphuntington.com

#### Camp Loyaltown

Hunter, NY 12442.  
518-263-4242 or www.camployaltown.org

#### Camp Northwood

132 State Route 365  
Remsen, NY 13438-5700  
315-831-3621 or www.nwood.com

#### Frost Valley YMCA Camps

2000 Frost Valley Rd  
Claryville, NY 12725  
845-985-2291 or www.frostvalley.org

#### Helen Keller Summer Camp

Farmingdale State University of New York  
516-485-1235, ext. 617 or info@helenkeller.org.

#### Gersh Academy at West Hills Day Camp

150 Broad Hollow Rd., Ste. 120,  
Melville, NY 11747  
631-385-3342 or www.gershacademy.org

#### JCC of the Greater Five Towns Camp Friendship

207 Grove Ave.,  
Cedarhurst, NY 11516. 5

516-569-6733 or Gayle.fremed@fivetownsjcc.org

#### Kehilla Vocation Experience

Henry Kaufman Campgrounds,  
75 Colonial Springs Rd.  
Wheatley Heights, NY 11798  
516-484-1545 or www.sjcc.org

#### Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center Aspire Program

45 Manetto Hill Rd.,  
Plainview, NY 11803  
516-822-3535, Ext. 332 or www.miyjcc.org

#### My Shine Program

Sweet Hills Riding Center. West Hills Park,  
Sweet Hollow Rd.,  
Melville, NY 11747  
516-551-1491 or www.myshineprogram.com

#### NYU Summer Program for Kids

College of New Rochelle,  
New Rochelle, NY  
516-358-1811 or donofd01@nyumc.org

#### Our Victory Day Camp

46 Vineyard Lane  
Stamford, CT 06902  
203- 329-3394 or www.ourvictory.com

#### Powerpals Physical Fitness Camp

4 Cedar Swamp Rd.,  
Glen Cove, NY 11542.  
www.power-pals.com

#### Ramapo For Children

Rhinebeck Campus  
P.O. Box 266 Rt. 52 Salisbury Turnpike  
Rhinebeck, NY 12572  
845-878-8403 or www.ramapoforchildren.org

#### Summit Camp & Travel

322 Route 46 West, Suite 210  
Parsippany, NJ 07054  
800-323-9908 or www.summitcamp.com

#### Southampton Fresh Air Home

36 Barkers Island Rd  
Southampton NY 11968  
631-283-5847 or www.sfah.org

#### TAPA (Theresa Academy of Performing Arts) for Children

#### with Special Needs

516-432-0200 or www.TheresaFoundation.org.

### CEREBRAL PALSY

#### United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Suffolk, Inc.

250 Marcus Blvd. PO Box 18045,  
Hauppauge, NY 11788-8845  
(631) 232-0011  
www.ucp-suffolk.org

Services Provided: Case management, community education, information and referral, residential, vocational/employment

#### United Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County, Inc.

380 Washington Avenue  
Roosevelt, NY 11575  
(516) 378-2000  
www.ucpn.org

Services Provided: All developmental disabilities

### DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES

#### Child Find Program

Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Bureau of Public Health Nursing  
PO Box 6100

Hauppauge, NY 11788-0099  
(631) 853-3069 (Western Suffolk)  
(631) 852-1591 (Eastern Suffolk)

Service Provided: Children under the Age of three, who have significant health problems or need special health care, may be eligible to receive services from a public health nurse.

The nurse will make home visits to provide support, information and training, as well as periodic screening and assessment of infant development. The program is designed to assist families in their care of babies born with health related issues, monitor and/or identify potential growth and learning problems and provide referrals to other support services (including Early Intervention) when appropriate.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

*Continued on page 46*

# Long Island Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

*Continued from page 45*

Some examples of children who are eligible are: Children who were born after a pregnancy of less than 33 weeks; Children who weighed less than three pounds at birth; children who spent more than 9 days in a neonatal or special care unit; children who exhibit growth and/or developmental problems; and children with special health problems.

### Children with Special Health Care Needs Program

(Formerly Physically Handicapped Children's Program)

Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Division of Services for Children with Special Needs

50 Laser Court

Hauppauge, NY 11788

(631) 853-3000

Services Provided: Residents of Suffolk County under the age of 21, with chronic or disabling medical conditions may be eligible for diagnostic and/or treatment services through PHCP. Most children with chronic health problems can obtain a diagnostic evaluation to enable physicians to establish a diagnosis; a qualified family can address care plans for their child which may include surgical procedures, therapies and medications. PHCP may also assist families in securing devices such as braces, wheelchairs, hearing aids and other medical equipment and supplies.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Some examples of children ages birth to 21 who are eligible for services are:

Children with chronic health conditions such as spina bifida, asthma, diabetes, cerebral palsy, PKU, cancer, blood, hearing or seizure disorders, heart conditions, etc.

Parents may be asked to pay a fee based on their ability to pay.

### Feel Better Kids

626 RXR Plaza

Uniondale, New York 11556

(866)257-kids(5437)

Services Provided: Feel Better Kids is a not-for-profit children's charity whose primary mission is to help children who are seriously ill or disabled.

### Long Island Infant Development Program

Nassau County

2174 Hewlett Avenue, Suite 105

Merrick, NY 11566

Suffolk County

15 Smiths Lane

Commack, NY 11725

(516) 546-2333

(631) 300-2333

Services Provided: Early Intervention, Preschool, ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) services from birth through age 5

### Nassau County Health Department, Early Intervention Program

106 Charles Lindbergh Blvd.

Uniondale, NY 11553

(516) 227-8661

Services Provided: Information and referral

Other: Point of entry into early intervention services

### Nassau Early Childhood Direction Center

Variety Child Learning Center

47 Humphrey Drive

Syosset, NY 11791

(516) 921-7171/(800) 933-8779

www.vclc.org

Services Provided: Information and referral, Individual/Case advocacy

Other: Preschool programs, transportation, medical, educational and social services, evaluation and assessment services, parent education programs and resources.

### National Center for Disability Services

201 I.U. Willets Road

Albertson, NY 11507

(516) 747-5400

www.abilitiesonline.org

Services Provided: Assistive tech/equipment, Case management, community education, future planning, information and referral, individual/case advocacy, legal advocacy, vocational employment.

### The Hagedorn Little Village School

Jack Joel Center for Special Children

750 Hicksville Road

Seaford, New York 11783

(516)520-6000

Services Provided: The mission of HLVS is to provide the finest educational and therapeutic programs for infants and young children with a wide range of developmental disabili-

ties. These disabilities may include cognitive delays, social/emotional deficits, autistic spectrum disorders, speech/language delays, orthopedic and/or motor impairments, visual impairments, and/or significant medical issues.

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## DOWN SYNDROME

### Association for Children with Down Syndrome Inc.

4 Fern Place, Plainview, NY 11803

(516) 933-4700

www.ACDS.org

Individuals Served: Down Syndrome, Mental Retardation

Counties Served: Nassau, Suffolk, Kings, Queens

Services Provided: Case management, community education, future planning, information and referral, Individual/Case advocacy, treatment.

---

## EDUCATION

### Gersh Academy

21 Sweet Hollow Road

Huntington NY, 11743

Phone: 631.385.3342

Fax: 631.427.6332

www.gershacademy.org

Gersh Academy is a special education school headquartered in Long Island, New York. Unlike other autism schools, Gersh Academy is a school where children with learning disabilities can spend their entire career, from kindergarten through college, in a coordinated learning environment customized to their individual needs.

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## EPILEPSY

### Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island

550 Stewart Avenue

Garden City, NY 11530

(516) 739-7733

www.epilepsyfoundation.org/longisland/

Services Provided: The Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island serves people with Epilepsy, as well as other developmental disabilities through its Day Habilitation program; Residential program; a Community Services program that provides Medicaid Service Coordination, Respite, and Residential

# Long Island Special Needs

## RESOURCE GUIDE

Habilitation.

### Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York

257 Park Avenue South, Suite 302, New York, NY 10010  
(212) 677-8550  
[www.epilepsyinstitute.org](http://www.epilepsyinstitute.org)

---

## GENERAL

### Family and Children Association

180 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Hicksville  
(516) 935-6858  
175 Nassau Rd., Rossevelt  
(516) 623-1644  
510 Hempstead Tpke, Ste. 202  
West Hempstead

### LDA of Long Island

44 South Elmwood Avenue  
Montauk, NY 11954  
(631) 688-4858  
[ldalongisland@yahoo.com](mailto:ldalongisland@yahoo.com)

Services Provided: LDANY'S regional affiliates provide a variety of programs and services for children and adults with learning disabilities. Please contact the regional affiliates closest to you for local information and referrals or to find out more about specific services offered.

### Services for Children with Special Needs

50 Laser Ct., Hauppauge  
(631) 853-3100  
[www.co.suffolk.ny.us/departments/healthservices/children.aspx](http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/departments/healthservices/children.aspx)  
Contact: Liz Corrao

### The K.I.S.S. Center (Kids In Special Services)

at the Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center  
45 Manetto Hill Rd., Plainview  
(516) 822-3535  
[www.miyicc.org](http://www.miyicc.org)  
Contact: Joanna M. Diamond, MS. Ed., director

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## FINE AND CULTURAL ARTS

### Art without Walls, Inc.

P.O. Box 341  
Satville, New York 11782  
(631) 567-9418  
[www.artwithoutwalls.net](http://www.artwithoutwalls.net)  
[artwithoutwalls3@webtv.net](mailto:artwithoutwalls3@webtv.net)

Services Provided: Art without Walls, Inc. Established in 1985 is an award winning 501c3 NY state arts-health organization that develops original fine art and cultural programs to the disabled community. Art workshops, college portfolios, art therapy, art and cultural trips and exhibitions ages 7-18. Some adult programs are also available.

---

## MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

### Muscular Dystrophy Association

11 East 44th Street, New York, NY 10017  
(212) 682-5272  
[www.mda.org](http://www.mda.org)

Services Provided: Assistive Tech/equipment, case management, community education, future planning, information and referral, legal advocacy, treatment.

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## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Suffolk County Department of Social Services

3085 Veterans Memorial Highway,  
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779  
(631) 854-9930

Services Provided: Services vary by county

### Suffolk County Department of Social Services, Family & Children's

Services Administration  
3455 Veterans Memorial Highway,  
Hauppauge, NY 11779  
(631) 854-9434

Services Provided: Child protective services, foster care placement

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## TOURETTE SYNDROME

### National Tourette Syndrome Association

42-40 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361-2820  
(718) 224-2999  
[www.tourette-syndrome.com](http://www.tourette-syndrome.com)

Services Provided: Community education, information and referral

---

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

### Nassau County BOCES Rosemary Kennedy School

2850 North Jerusalem Road, Wantagh, NY 11793  
[www.staffet@mail.nasboces.org](mailto:www.staffet@mail.nasboces.org)  
(516) 396-2600

Services Provided: Educational services for students with developmental disabilities from age 9-21

### The Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County (Nassau BOCES)

Serves the 56 school districts of Nassau County, Long Island, by providing cost-effective shared services, including career training for high school students and adults, special education, alternative schools, technology education, and teacher training, as well as dozens of programs to expand educational opportunity and help districts operate more efficiently.

### Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)

NYS Education Dept.  
Riverhead office, Plaza 524, East Main Street, Riverhead, NY 11901  
(631) 727-6496

Service Provided: Assistive tech/equipment, community education, information and referral, vocational/employment

### Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)

NYS Education Dept.  
Hauppauge District Office, NYS Office Building,  
250 Veterans Highway,  
Hauppauge, NY 11788  
(631) 952-6357

Services Provided: Assistive tech/equipment, community education, information and referral, vocational/employment.

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tion, and foster problem solving skills and independence. Summit Travel offers trips for young people ages 15-19.

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**Dr. Jenny Abraham**



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### THREE CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

1000 F Park Boulevard, Massapequa Park, NY 62 Lake Avenue South, Suite A, Nesconset, NY 615 Montauk Highway, West Islip, NY

**516.798.1111**

**631.360.7337**

**631-661-7337**

**Please visit us on the web at [www.AMPediatricDental.com](http://www.AMPediatricDental.com)**